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# "I had absolutely no idea that so many women love as I do . . . .":

# Subculture, *Die Freundin*, and the Construction of the Lesbian Identity in the Weimar Republic

by

Angeles Espinaco - Virseda

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

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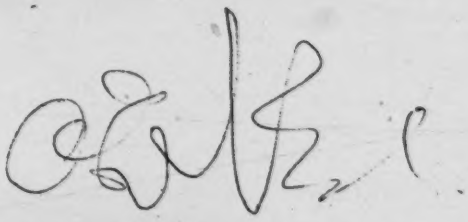

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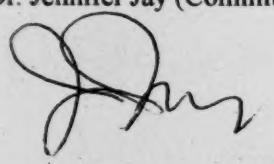

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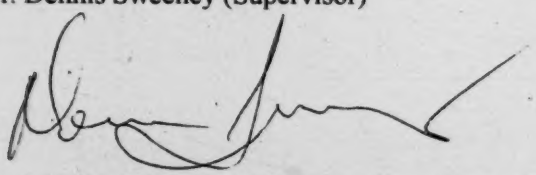

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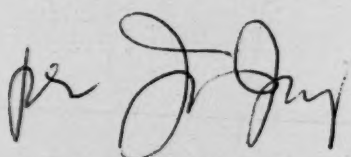

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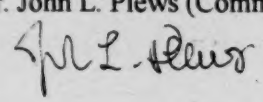

September 13, 2002

For John R. Buhler,
with love

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Angeles Espinaco-Virseda (August 23, 2002)

Abstract:

"I had absolutely no idea that so many women love as I do . . . .":

Subculture, *Die Freundin*, and the Construction of the

Lesbian Identity in the Weimar Republic

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Lesbian identity as it emerged in the Weimar Republic was unique to that era. It was the product of the dominant social and medical discourses which created it, as well as of the reverse discourse that emerged from the resulting subculture. Consequently, lesbian identity was fluid and shifting rather than stable. Its indeterminate boundaries often produced multiple and contradictory meanings, sometimes overlapping with other identities such as that of the feminist or the New Woman. However, mass culture facilitated the elaboration and homogenization of lesbian subculture and identity. An analysis of the lesbian magazine, *Die Freundin*, shows that the homosexual subculture contributed to the development of lesbian identity and how it acquired its contemporary manifestation. This suggests that the Weimar lesbian was not a universal and constant entity, but rather that she was the construction of a unique historical context of social change, medicalization and the development of mass culture.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDF Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine (German Women's Associations)

BfM Bund für Menschenrecht (League for Human Rights)

DFV Deutscher Freundschaftsverband (German Friendship Association)

WhK Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee

(Scientific-humanitarian Committee)

## Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Weimar Republic represents a unique moment in the history of German women. It was a time characterized by changes to gender roles, giving rise to widespread interest in and concern about feminism and the New Woman, but it was also marked by the emergence of a large and visible homosexual subculture. Unprecedented was the appearance of the lesbian, whose existence, prior to the First World War, was said to be rare. In the Weimar Republic, her existence was substantiated and elaborated through medical discourse, the homosexual emancipation movement and an entire industry of nightclubs, books, films and magazines.

Lesbian identity as it emerged in the Weimar Republic was unique to that era. It was a non-essential identity which was the product of the dominant social and medical discourses which created it, as well as of the reverse discourse that emerged from the resulting subculture. Consequently, lesbian identity was a site of contest – it was fluid and shifting rather than stable. Its indeterminate boundaries often produced multiple and contradictory meanings, sometimes overlapping with other identities such as that of the feminist or the New Woman. However, the mass culture which flourished at that time, especially in Berlin, facilitated the elaboration and homogenization of lesbian subculture and identity. In particular, an analysis of the lesbian magazine, *Die Freundin*, shows that the homosexual subculture contributed to the development of lesbian identity and that this interacted with the dominant discourse to acquire its contemporary manifestation. This

suggests that the Weimar lesbian was not a universal and constant entity, but rather that she was the construction of a unique historical context of social change, medicalization and the development of mass culture.

World War I precipitated many of the social pressures manifested in Weimar provoking challenges to the gender paradigm. As Elisabeth Domansky has suggested, the new mode of 'total war' was made possible by a reorganization of German society that shifted "the spheres of production and reproduction."[1] Many women took up the heavy industrial work necessitated by the war effort and assumed the role of the 'head of household,' doing double shifts as housewives and providers. The hardships of daily survival and the 'food question' led women to make strong demands for government intervention. According to Belinda Davis, the government's intercession legitimized the women's demands and political agency, ultimately contributing to the internal collapse of the Imperial government.[2] Yet Ute Daniel has asserted that none of this produced any long-term structural changes to German society.[3] Nevertheless, this thesis suggests that the post-war struggle to reassert traditional gender roles contributed to the production of lesbian identity.

Modern warfare also changed the way that men perceived their masculinity. Trench warfare negated the masculine ideal of man-to-man combat and contributed to a sense of

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[1] Elisabeth Domansky, "Militarization and Reproduction in World War I Germany," in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 430.

[2] Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[3] Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women in the First World War*, trans. Margret Ries (Oxford: Berg, 1997).

emasculation and feminization. Furthermore, many men had suffered debilitating injuries making them dependent and unfit for work. This heightened their sense that they had, in all respects, lost their virility. As Beth Irwin Lewis has shown, this tension between emasculation (or rather the desire to assert power) and a hated femininity was illustrated by the contemporary preoccupation with *Lustmord* (sex murder) and the physical mutilation of women.[4]

'Modernization' of the workplace, accelerated by the war, also heightened male anxieties about changing gender roles. The de-skilling of production techniques brought more women into the workplace and a new category of "women's jobs" appeared in the emerging public and private sectors, industry and commerce.[5] Efforts to return women to their previous 'traditional' roles and functions increased, but the high male mortality rate of the war had left the Republic with a so-called 'female surplus' of unmarried and widowed women.

As Richard Bessel has suggested, the demands made on the country's inadequate resources for coping with demobilization and the associated social problems unfortunately created a climate of instability, to which the solutions were also a source of conflict. Furthermore, the image of the 'front generation' excluded women from political life and the

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[4] Beth Irwin Lewis, "Lustmord: Inside the Windows of the Metropolis,"in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[5] Magnus Hirschfeld, Hrsgb., *Sittengeschichte des Weltkrieges* (Leipzig und Wien: Verlag fuer Sexualwissenschaft Schneider & Co., 1930), 8; Peukert, 96.

benefits accorded to returning soldiers.[6] The economic crises of the Republic made it difficult for women to provide for themselves since generally they had less well-paying jobs, had received less education than men, and had fewer employment options available to them. During the inflationary crises of the early 1920s, dependent women were in especially precarious circumstances, since it was only considered appropriate for single women and widows to work. Married working women were seen as repudiating the "wife-and-mother principle" and were vilified as "*Doppelverdiener*" ("Double income earners"). [7]

Prior to the war, the German Women's Movement had lobbied for greater participation in public life based on the argument that women's special qualities could make a unique contribution to society through 'social motherhood.'[8] This solidified the boundaries around women's construction as mothers. The Federation of German Women's Associations (*Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* or BDF), formed in 1894 as an umbrella organization for women's groups whose interests ranged from teetotalism and child care to suffrage and worker's associations, maintained this conservativism, since it represented only those views acceptable to a majority of its membership. Member organizations such as the National Union of German Housewives' Association tended to pull the BDF towards the Right.[9]

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[6] Richard Bessel, *Germany After the First World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

[7] Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1991), 96.

[8] Ibid., 98-99.

[9] Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (New York: Berg, 1988), 113, 129.

After the war, along with their enfranchisement, women increasingly obtained higher education and held political office.[10] In 1919, women comprised 9.6% of the Weimar National Assembly. The Social Democrats provided more than half of this number. Forty-nine women, including Gertrude Bäumer of the German Democratic Party (and former chair of the BDF), were elected from a broad range of parties: the German People's Party, the German National People's Party, the Catholic Centre, and the Independent Social Democrats.[11]

Both sides of the political spectrum were programmatically divided over the role of women. Traditionalists on the Right, like some Catholic organizations and the Catholic Centre Party, the German National People's Party, the German People's Party and even women's groups like the Housewives' associations and the Evangelical Women's Federation,[12] sought a return to the patriarchy of the prewar years while prominent socialists such as August Bebel and Clara Zetkin of the SPD advocated a strong feminist position. Galvanized by the social reforms made after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the KPD demanded equal rights for women; an end to "bourgeois hypocrisy" and sexual double standards; that husbands treat their wives as equals; and that the structure of family life change in order to end women's subordination.[13]

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[10] Cornelie Usborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 85; Frevert, 169.

[11] Frevert, 169.

[12] Frevert, 169, 173, 193, 207, 208.

[13] Usborne, 93-94.

As Cornelie Usborne has suggested, total mobilization and the modern trend towards medicalization emphasized the role of women in the Weimar Republic in contributing healthy members to the 'national body'.[14] Furthermore, as Atina Grossmann has shown, the increasing tendency of physicians and medical 'experts' to involve themselves in questions of women's health fueled concerns about how women's bodies were used.[15]

Reproduction, the patriarchal family, the emancipation of women, and the regulation of sexuality were seen as political issues that impacted the health and recovery of the nation. A high birth rate was seen as an indication of a "young and vigorous nation," imperialist and national virility, and military power.[16] Yet Germany's national birthrate had been declining since the 1870s. After the war, fears became acute that women had staged a 'birth strike,' prompting calls to restrict access to abortion and birth control. Concerns about social decay and biological degeneration sustained arguments that if the morally upright middle and upper classes ceased to reproduce or produced only offspring genetically weakened through "decadence" and immorality, then the future of Germany was imperiled.[17]

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[14] Peter Fritzsche, "Did Weimar Fail?," *Journal of Modern History* 68 (September 1996): 650.

[15] Atina Grossmann, "The New Woman and the Rationalization of Sexuality in Weimar Germany," in *Power of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983); Ibid., *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Brith Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[16] Usborne, 3, 17, 30.

[17] Usborne, 10; Note that access to birth control and abortion were widely advocated for the poor, and underpinned by eugenic arguments on all sides of the political spectrum.

Such theories had their roots in a larger discourse of degeneration which originated in the late 19th century with theorists such as B. A. Morel and Cesare Lombroso. Gradually, concerns about the individual 'degenerate' shifted to concern about the individual's effect on all of society.[18] Max Nordau's widely read book *Degeneration* (1895), asserted that Europe was undergoing biological decline, a theme which Oswald Spengler took up and modified further in 1918. In his critique of modern industrial society, Nordau suggested that the vagaries of urban life caused physical decline that manifested itself as symptoms of mental and moral derangement.[19] Nordau opposed the women's movement and believed that "vices" such as homosexuality embodied degeneracy because he associated (middle-class) sexual morality with self-discipline.[20]

Such theories reflected concerns about modernization and the changing structures of daily life. As we have seen, not only did rationalization change the nature of work but it also changed who participated in the workplace. Furthermore, the nature of leisure and entertainment had also changed. As Germans increasingly participated in mass culture, the historian Peter Fritzsche suggests, they became both spectators as well as consumers.[21]

At the end of the 19th century, publishing had reached a turning point as the large-

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[18] For a full overview see Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[19] George L. Mosse, introduction to *Degeneration*, by Max Nordau (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968 [1895] ). xxiii, 34-37; Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968 [1895] ), 18, 40-43.

[20] Mosse, xxiv; Nordau, 13.

[21] Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 247.

scale production of books and magazines revolutionized mass leisure. As Fritzsche shows, the speed at which such works, especially newspapers, could be produced – and replaced – by new ones, created the impression that modernity was a constant process of making and remaking. Furthermore, since it was possible to respond to changes in society very quickly this produced a constant stream of variety that was as uniform as it was diverse.[22]

The effect of the mass media on the lesbian 'subculture' was similar. According to Theodore W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, mass culture had a homogenizing effect on society. However, this study of lesbian subculture shows that 'mass culture,' and its variety of forms, allowed for a profusion of sexual differences and facilitated the construction of new identities. As *Die Freundin* offered women an increasing variety of lesbian representations, which accommodated the changing and varied roles of women, it promoted sexual diversity. However the tendency of *Die Freundin* to reiterate certain markers of identity produced conformity to the ideal. Still, Weimar lesbian identity was never static. It was forged and modified through the constant process of redefinition that was made possible by mass culture.

The emergence of modern mass culture coincided with the rise of homosexual subculture. This correlation is made salient by the fact that in 1896, Adolf Brand published the first male homophile periodical and in 1897, Germany's first homosexual emancipation movement, the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* or WhK) was founded by the physician Magnus Hirschfeld and his colleagues. The WhK's highly visible political activism (such as a petition, signed by 5 000 individuals, for the

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[22] Ibid., 3-4.

reform of Paragraph 175, the law criminalizing male homosexuality) was publicized by the mass media which reported and commented upon it, but the WhK also took an active role in creating its own media representations.[23] In one year alone the WhK had 320 publications ranging from medical and legal texts to fiction.[24]

Soon, a large homosexual subculture emerged. Before 1914, there were approximately 40 male homosexual bars and 2000 male prostitutes in Berlin.[25] After the First World War, according to Curt Moreck, the author of a Berlin travel guide highlighting the city's sexual attractions, there were eighty bars and clubs for homosexual males. For lesbians, there were at least another eighty.[26] During the 1920s, the more than 300 cinemas in Berlin and the (temporary) abolition of censorship in the Republic afforded the sexual subculture a tremendous license to reach homosexuals.[27] As Richard Dyer has discussed, between 1918 and 1933 there were an astonishing number of films made that dealt directly with male and female homosexuality.[28] Recently other scholars have also begun to examine

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[23] Iwan Bloch, *The Sexual Life of our Time in its Relations to Modern Civilization*, trans. M. Eden Paul (London: William Heinemann, 1930 [1908] ), 524-25.

[24] James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 23-24.

[25] Ibid., 27.

[26] Curt Moreck, *Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag moderner Stadtführer, 1996 [1931]), 134, 156.

[27] Usborne, 76.

[28] Richard Dyer, "Less and More than Women and Men: Lesbian and Gay Cinema in Weimar Germany," *New German Critique* 51 (1990). <http://ehostvgw11.epnet.com/fulltext.a....=4&booleanTerm=gay%20cinema&fuzzyterm=>

some of these works.[29] Similarly, some of the large quantity of lesbian popular literature available in the Weimar Republic, particularly the work of Anna Elisabet Weirauch, the author of a celebrated trilogy of novels, has attracted scholarly interest.[30]

The current scholarship available on the lesbian subculture in Germany, in both English and German, is limited. Ilse Kokula, Claudia Schoppmann, Adele Meyer, Lillian Faderman and Brigitte Eriksson have all provided valuable documentation of a previous era.[31] In addition, Katharina Vogel and Petra Schlierkamp have documented the history of

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[29] Ibid.; Ruby Rich, "'Mädchen in Uniform.' From Repressive Tolerance to Erotic Liberation," in *Gender and the German Cinema: Feminist Interventions, volume II: German Film History/German History on Film*, ed. Sandra Frieden, Richard W. McCormick, Vibeke R. Petersen, and Laurie Melissa Vogelsang (Providence, R. I. and Oxford: Berg, 1993);Rosi Kreische, "Lesbische Liebe in Film bis 1950," in *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Männer in Berlin 1850-1950 Geschichte, Alltag und Kultur*, ed. Michael Bolle (Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1984).

[30] Claudia Schoppmann, *'Der Skorpion' – Frauenliebe in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Fruehlings Erwachen 8, 1985); Claudia Schoppmann, "Ein Lebensroman aus der Weimarer Zeit: 'Der Skorpion'," in *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Maenner in Berlin 1850-1950, Geschichte, Alltag und Kultur*, ed. Michael Bolle (Berlin: Froelich & Kaufmann, 1984); Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians During the Third Reich*, trans. Allison Brown (New York: Columbia University, 1996), 4; Pia Garde, "Karin Boye in Berlin oder Versuch der Neubewertung einer zur Heiligen stilisierten lesbischen Schriftstellerin," in *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Maenner in Berlin 1850-1950, Geschichte, Alltag und Kultur*, ed. Michael Bolle (Berlin: Froelich & Kaufmann, 1984); Nancy Nenno, "Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*, " in *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture*, ed. Christopher Lorey and John L. Plews (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1998).

[31] Ilse Kokula, *Jahre des Glücks, Jahre des Leids: Gespraeche mit aelteren lesbischen Frauen* (Kiel: Verlag Fruehlings Erwachen, 1990); Ilse Kokula, *Weibliche Homosexualität um 1900 in zeitgenoessischen Dokumenten* (Muenchen: Verlag Frauenoffensive, 1981); Claudia Schoppmann, *Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians During the Third Reich,* trans. Allison Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Adele Meyer, ed., *Lila Nächte: Die Damenklubs im Berlin der Zwanziger Jahre* (Berlin: Edition Lit.europe, 1994); Lillian Faderman and Brigitte Eriksson, *Lesbians in Germany: 1890s - 1920s* (Tallahassee, Fl.: Naiad Press, 1990).

the lesbian magazines, *Die Freundin* and *Garçonne*.[32] As a foundation for further scholarship their work is invaluable. Furthermore, in an attempt to prevent lesbians from being subsumed under the male-identified label of 'homosexual,' one recent scholar, Christiane von Langerke has investigated their numerous historical names .[33]

Yet despite the important contribution of these works, each of them assumes a constant and well-defined lesbian identity. None of them tries to understand what it meant to be a lesbian in the Weimar Republic. If we are to begin to comprehend Weimar lesbianism, then we have to investigate what the term itself encompassed. What was meant by it? Who was included? Excluded? Only when we answer these questions can we begin to know the nature and limits of the subculture itself.

To glibly define "lesbians" without investigating what was actually meant by the term at that time, glosses over a fundamental question pertaining to any cultural group. This thesis shows that no discrete category of analysis existed. In fact, the Weimar era represents a window from which to view not only the category of "woman" in a state of redefinition – a category which Denise Riley has already shown to be unstable – but also to show that this instability created the space for the emergence of lesbians as they appeared between

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[32] Katharina Vogel, "Zum Selbstverständnis lesbischer Frauen in der Weimarer Republik. Eine Analyse der Zeitschrift 'Die Freundin'' 1924-1933," in *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Maenner in Berlin 1850-1950, Geschichte, Alltag und Kultur*, ed. Michael Bolle (Berlin: Froelich & Kaufmann, 1984); Petra Schlierkamp, "Die Garconne," in *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Maenner in Berlin 1850-1950, Geschichte, Alltag und Kultur*, ed. Michael Bolle (Berlin: Froelich & Kaufmann, 1984),

[33] Christiane von Langerke, " 'Homosexuelle Frauen' Tribaden, Freundinnen, Urninden," in *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Maenner in Berlin 1850-1950, Geschichte, Alltag und Kultur*, ed. Michael Bolle (Berlin: Froelich & Kaufmann, 1984).

1919 and 1933.[34] How that identity was created and expressed in Germany at that time is the second question that this thesis will deal with. This is by no means to suggest that lesbian identity was fixed and precisely defined. Rather, it seems to have been in a state of flux and undergoing continual definition.

It is not sufficient to compress lesbianism, as Lillian Faderman has done, into an analysis that spans centuries ("from the Renaissance to the Present") and continents (the United States and Europe). Although her work is an intelligent and exhaustively researched literary analysis, it begins with the assumption that "by 'lesbian' we mean an all-consuming emotional relationship in which two women are devoted to each other above anyone else".[35] Like von Langerke, Faderman presupposes an essential lesbian identity. Yet how can the term "lesbian" be constant if its various manifestations – sexual relations, for example – have different implications in different contexts, temporal or geographic?

To create a 'sisterhood' stretching back centuries, as Faderman has done, serves the noble purpose of creating solidarity with modern sexual minorities and constructing a history by which to establish and legitimate an identity.[36] However, this is still, to some extent, a reactionary position in that it responds to the demands of the dominant discourse, rather than

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[34] Denise Riley, *"Am I that name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988).

[35] Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1981), 19.

[36] Adrienne Rich's "lesbian continuum" also theorizes female solidarity, but her primary intention is to "challenge the relationship of heterosexuality to male supremacy" ("Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, eds. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale and David M. Halperin [New York: Routledge, 1993], 248).

exposing the power structures that regulate behaviour, and encodes some sexual activities as 'normal' and 'natural' and others as 'abnormal' and 'unnatural.' We must follow the example of Gudrun Schwarz' work uncovering the mechanisms that regulated women's behaviour and defined them as "Viragos" in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany [37]

In this respect, the work of Joan Wallach Scott has been especially helpful not only in her insightful analysis of gender identities (which inspired this thesis) and historical knowledge production, but also in her examination of the processes of power inherent within historical constructions of gender. As Scott's work suggests, gender categories are not objective or divorced from their 'political' context. The construction of genders as opposites, but in relation to each other, suggests that the lesbian was not removed from the gender hierarchy. On the contrary, she was a product of it. Her identities were multiple and fluctuating – at once imbedded in and held apart from the male and female identities, as well as overlapping with the feminist, New Woman and the homosexual identity as a whole. Lesbian identity can not be marginalized to 'Women's history' but must be seen as unique to and integral to the larger history of inter-war Germany. The lesbian's existence affected the fundamental (patriarchal) structure of German society. As this would then suggest, my research draws attention to what was at stake in the contest over the meaning of the lesbian. The system of difference in which she was constructed was, paradoxically, threatened by her. She endangered the post-war recovery of the nation and could transform the very nature

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[37] Gudrun Schwarz, "'Viragos' in Male Theory in Nineteenth-Century Germany," trans. Joan Reutershan, in *Women of Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, eds. Judith Friedlander, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 139.

of German society.

Of course, as Scott points out, there is also something at stake for the historian who undertakes an investigation of gender. I wish to point out the multiple meanings that infuse the language of gender and which continue to define gender oppositionally.

In addition, Michel Foucault's Introduction to *The History of Sexuality* laid the foundation for a consideration of the processes of identity formation and suggested the inconstancy of sexual identity itself.[38] This thesis borrows from his insights, because it calls into question the essential and discrete categorization of lesbianism, particularly as it has been represented in the majority of the current historical scholarship. Furthermore, Foucault's insight that once an identity is formed it permits the development of a reverse discourse, informs my discussion of how *Die Freundin* responded to accusations of homosexual 'degeneracy' and how the magazine instead tried to fashion the homosexual identity into one that was 'natural' and 'civilized.' This implies not just a reactionary position, but a process of continual definition and self-conscious identification. It also shows lesbian identity to be a site of contest in which meanings were changing and boundaries permeable.

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first part, beginning with Chapter 2, shows that the traditional gender paradigm, which configured men and women as polar opposites, created a space for a vast and somewhat amorphous intermediate category to which women, such as feminists and New Women, were relegated because of their defiance of the gender

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[38] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990).

ideal. They shared this space with lesbians, with whom they were often conflated. Consequently, the meaning of 'lesbian' was unstable and shifting, contributing to the destabilization of not only the female, but also of male identity.

By examining how the dominant discourse conflated lesbians with feminists and show that both groups where characterized as being masculinized and not 'real women,' because they eschewed their roles as mothers (via their rejection of patriarchal marriage). In my examination of the New Woman, I discuss the varied and contradictory characterizations of the New Woman in popular society. I show how these two groups rejected traditional female roles, especially motherhood and sexual restraint. In this chapter, I also consider the lesbian's effect upon male identity. Not only did she emerge as a result of the male-female binary, but her 'hybrid' status, her proximity both to masculinity and to femininity, threatened the boundaries of the heterosexual paradigm creating a site of contestation.

In Part II, I examine lesbian subculture as it began to take shape within the homosexual community. Accordingly, in Chapter 3 I investigate how lesbians were identified by homosexual rights groups and sexologists and then, in Chapter 4, I show how the lesbian community mediated these influences and represented itself. Therefore, I present the personal recollections of lesbians, as well as two of the most important components of the lesbian community, clubs and magazines, especially *Die Freundin,* in order to consider how lesbian identity emerged and was shaped. The homosexual rights movement played a significant role in both of these venues, and all three were mutually supporting. I wish to identify the ways in which lesbians characterized themselves, sometimes ambiguously,

which includes their relationship to other groups within the homosexual community, particularly transvestites. This shows, in Chapter 5, that not only was lesbian identity not precisely defined, even within its own community, but that it was undergoing a process of definition that was contingent and context specific, heavily influenced by the reciprocal interaction of the dominant discourse and reverse discourse.

Some brief remarks about terminology are in order. References here to homosexual and/or lesbian subculture are not meant to suggest a precisely delimited ontological category. As this thesis will show, such a discrete entity did not exist in the Weimar Republic. It should also be added that although I use the word "traditional" to refer to the patriarchal gender paradigm, the term is by no means meant to suggest that I uphold that system as positive, natural, or historically constant. I have, however, chosen to use the term because it would seem to reflect the viewpoint of those in the Weimar Republic and because it conveniently denotes the paradigm I have outlined.

I have also elected to use the term "lesbian" consistently throughout this essay even though it was by no means the most frequently used term. During the Weimar era there were many terms in use for homosexual women. For me to use them arbitrarily and interchangeably would be to disregard the particular meaning of each. The varied terminology reflects the instability of lesbian identity, as well as the proliferation of identities during that time. However, my use of the term "lesbian" (or, for that matter, "lesbian identity") should not be misconstrued as implying that this was a simple and precisely defined identity. Again, my analysis suggests that lesbian identity was not stable or well-delineated and did not exist in isolation. Lesbian identity was created and supported

through medicalization, the homosexual mass media and other elements of homosexual subculture. My analysis examines this process.

Although this thesis undertakes to examine lesbians in the Weimar Republic, I have used some sources that originate prior to World War I, because these texts remained influential even after the war. For example, works by Iwan Bloch and Otto Weininger were published in numerous editions in the post-war period and were still referred to by Weimar authors. The large body of work by Magnus Hirschfeld was also significant in that even when it underwent revision or critique, it was still part of the popular currency.

Finally, post-war Germany underwent many changes. These changes did not occur in isolation but rather resonated throughout the web of social interaction. In the next chapter we will see how the insistence on a traditional gender code placed non-conformist women into an ambiguous social status where the distinctions between their identities were blurred.

# Part I

## Chapter 2

## The Shifting Identity of the Hybrid

The system of patriarchy is underpinned by a gender paradigm that configures men and women as opposite, complementary identities united in marriage. In the Weimar Republic, shifting gender boundaries prompted the need to fix and reassert opposing male and female identities so as to preserve this system. The 'intermediate' category of non-conformist women that this polarity produced, however, threatened the boundaries of the gender code. The medical-legal and popular discourse that worked to stabilize and regulate the categories that they had created, paradoxically provided women with new possibilities for self-identification giving rise to the shifting and frequently overlapping identities of the feminist, the New Woman and the lesbian. Lesbians' and feminists' interest in emancipation challenged the patriarchal system that subordinated women as wives and mothers. The unstable identities of the lesbian and the New Woman also overlapped in that both rejected women's maternal role and heterosexual complementarity. However, the destabilization of women's identity also destabilized male identity, which was defined against hers. The lesbian's ambiguous, gender status marked her as an impure hybrid, creating a dominant discourse that she was "perverse" and "dirty."

### Feminism and Lesbianism

> ". . . Women's emancipation is not simply just an emancipation of the homosexual woman, but nevertheless the origins of the women's movement can still for the most

part be traced back to Urning [lesbian] women."[1]

In 1886, the sex researcher Havelock Ellis was the earliest figure to draw a connection between lesbianism and the women's movement.[2] Later, in 1906 the physician Wilhelm Hammer also saw the origins of the women's movement in lesbianism, whereas conversely, around the same time, the sexual scientist Iwan Bloch saw the roots of homosexuality in the women's movement.[3] In his1924 tome, *Die Frauenemanzipation und ihre erotische Grundlagen*, the anti-feminist author E. F. W. Eberhard accused lesbians of stirring up women's desire to be free of men, and of spreading lesbianism by seducing young women. The lesbian's dangerous influence, which would lead to civilizational decline, could only be stopped if "woman remains in her household circle."[4] On the other hand, arguing on the basis of heteronormative assumptions, by 1930 the sex researcher Dr. M. Hirschfeld was asserting that the lesbian woman's masculine attributes, that is, her interest in public life, her independence, her leadership abilities and so on, made her an important member of the women's movement. "Normal" women had simply been "called to awakening" by her.[5]

According to the lesbian and feminist Anna Rueling, writing in 1904, the two groups

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[1] ". . . Die Frauenemanzipation ist zwar nicht allein eine Emanzipation der homosexuellen Frau, aber die Entstehung der Frauenbewegung ist trotzdem zum guten Teil auf urnische Frauen zurückzuführen." (E. F. W. Eberhard cited in Hirschfeld, *Sittengeschichte*, 16).

[2] Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 42.

[3] Bloch, 529.

[4] Faderman, 336.

[5] Hirschfeld, *Sittengeschichte*, 15-17.

were "destined to help each other find justice and recognition and to abolish the injustice against which they now struggle."[6] However, only occasionally did the women's movement advocate for the rights of homosexuals. In 1911, members of the League for the Protection of Mothers (*Bund für Mutterschutz*) helped to prevent an extension of the provisions of Paragraph 175 to criminalize female homosexuality.[7]

The various groups in the women's emancipation movement, which began in the second half of 19th century, differed in their approaches to women's emancipation. Groups like the Federation of German Women's Associations (*Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* or BDF) advocated sexual equality in family law. Along with the General German Women's Association they opposed patriarchal rights over the family by seeking independent legal status for women.[8] Only Helene Stöcker's group, the League for the Protection of Mothers, which was the most progressive women's emancipation group, believed that access to birth control would end women's subordination within the patriarchy of middle class family and public life.[9] Reproductive control was viewed by many as a sign of "moral depravity" leading to promiscuity because it separated sexuality from procreation.[10] Stöcker also challenged the patriarchal institution of marriage by advocating instead a radical "new ethic"

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[6] Faderman and Eriksson, 84.

[7] Ibid, xv, xvi.

[8] Frevert, 135-36.

[9] Although they still upheld maternity as the ideal profession for women; Usborne, 15.

[10] Ibid.,11, 23, 30.

of companionate marriage.

The dissatisfaction with conventional, patriarchal marriage continued to be a theme for women. In the 1920s, lesbians were still seeking freedom from the social obligation to marry and produce children. This was reflected in the homosexual press, which featured, for example, a grisly report of an American lesbian who murdered her husband with a hammer. This was only one of a number of unhappy stories about forced marriages.[11] Furthermore, the desire for mutually satisfying, romantic relationships was a constant theme in lesbian magazines which characterized homosexual relationships as a "Kameradschaft" (comradeship) in which two women were "two souls and one mind".[12]

The desire for emancipation was not seen as a feminine trait: according to Otto Weininger, "It is only the man in her that wants to be emancipated."[13] Woman's role (and inadequacy) was seen as a function of her biological sex, which determined that "Woman as wife and mother stands at the climax of her existence." This was "the supreme duty of her sexual nature."[14] When women strayed from their role and took up careers or when they aimed for the "advancement of women", then their occupations and aspirations, and

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[11] "Aus Liebe zur Freundin den Mann erschlagen!", *Die Freundin*, 2 April 1928, 4.

[12] "zwei Seelen und ein Gedanke"; Hansi, "Als Sonny Boy Modell stand," *Die Freundin*, 22 Feb. 1933, 2.

[13] "Nur der Mann in ihnen ist es, der sich emanzipieren will." (Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* [Wien und Leipzig, 1920], 81.

[14] E. Heinrich Kisch, *The Sexual Life of Woman in its Physiological, Pathological and Hygienic Aspects*, trans. M. Eden Paul (London: Heinemann Medical Books, 1926) [1904], 201, 202.

sometimes their physical appearance, was characterized as "masculine".[15] Furthermore, when women rejected their maternal role, the physician Dr. Kisch (1904) quoted the feminist Ellen Key, they became members of the "'third sex,' the sex of the worker bee, of the neuter ant."[16]

The issue of sexual indeterminacy was a question of serious importance reaching back to the discourse of social degeneration. According to Iwan Bloch, differentiation and separation of the sexes was indicative of civilizational progress. ". . . notwithstanding the retrogressive changes associated with the excessive development of the brain, we find that there is **an increasing differentiation of the sexes induced by civilization.** . . . this fact . . . possesses great importance in connexion with the discussion of the woman's question and the problem of homosexuality . . . ." [original emphasis].[17]

What concerned Bloch about the Woman's Movement, which he defined as "the movement directed towards the acquirement by woman of all the attainments of masculine culture," was its role in "the diffusion of pseudo-homosexuality" (acquired homosexuality).[18] In his view, "true" congenital homosexuality was contrary to the advancement of civilization, but since homosexuals could not reproduce, they posed no grave threat. However, the spread of lesbianism via the Women's Movement was for him a threat to evolutionary progress. "Sexual differentiation stands and falls with civilization. The former

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[15] "höhere Befähigung des Weibes" (Weininger, 79, 80).

[16] Kisch, 201.

[17] Bloch, 57.

[18] Ibid., 529.

is the indispensable preliminary of the latter. Destroy it, and the whole course of development will be reversed."[19]

Bloch's concern with the association between feminism and lesbianism was also about the threat of masculinization. For him, masculinization meant both a blurring of the gender boundaries – he associated this blurring with primitiveness – but also with the generation of a kind of Amazon. Citing the work of Friedrich Ratzel, he referred to the possibility of a "primordial gynecocracy, a 'regiment of women.'"[20] To him, the masculinization of women portended the female acquisition of male status which also upended the fundamental structure of civilized society.

We do not truly know the extent of lesbians' involvement in feminism. Although Anna Rueling did not provide any names, she asserted that many prominent leaders of the Women's Movement at the turn of the century were also lesbians. Still, Germans' confusion and anxiety about lesbianism and feminism during a time of gender-boundary crisis reflected their concern that patriarchy was being undermined and that social degeneration would follow. The medical discourse that named intermediate women facilitated women's self-identification, but it also fueled fears of imminent social instability and decline in the Weimar Republic.

## Lesbianism and the New Woman

The New Woman was a complex blend of identities merged into one shifting image.

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[19] Ibid., 59, 534.

[20] Ibid., 59.

Much like the lesbian, she could not be pinned-down as being one 'type.' Perhaps this was because she challenged so many more norms than the feminist did: she denied her supposedly fundamental role as a mother and completely denied male-female complementarity through her "masculine" behaviours and her physical appearance.

The publication of Victor Margueritte's *La Garçonne* in 1922 popularized the New Woman and her distinctive pageboy (*Bubikopf*) hair cut, but her representation also blurred the boundaries of lesbianism. In Margueritte's novel, the protagonist, Monique, rejects the bourgeois morality of her family and their exploitation of women through the institution of marriage. She turns her back on middle class society and pursues a 'decadent' lifestyle of dancing, drinking and sexual libertinism that includes an openly lesbian love affair and a series of male lovers.[21] After she learns that she is sterile, the story continues to its end with a morally conservative plot. Nevertheless, the story of *La Garçonne* illustrates the dual and shifting identities of the New Woman: she is at times an independent and licentious 'party girl,' at times maternal, and at times a lesbian.

Typically the New Woman was portrayed as wearing make-up and simple, stylish short dresses and skirts much like the 'type' exemplified by Louise Brooks in G. W. Pabst's film *Pandora's Box* (1928). The New Woman actively pursued personal pleasure, and approached men directly. Ideally, she was flat-chested, small-hipped and androgynous – a

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[21] Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917 - 1927* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 50-54.

'flapper' sporting a boxy dress and a *Bubikopf* haircut.[22] However, as Patrice Petro has shown, her chic bourgeois stylishness could be disparately represented as functional working-class practicality.[23]

The identity of the New Women was ambiguous in other ways. She was "non-political, consumption-oriented [and] enamoured of the products of the mass media" and the cinema often glamourized her as 'the vamp.'[24] Yet, in contradiction to this, as Atina Grossmann has shown, the New Woman was also exalted as the ideal housewife and mother who brought the rationalization of the workplace into the home so that she could effectively juggle both careers.[25]

The New Woman's 'intersexual' appearance gave her the shifting identity of a 'hybrid.' She was at once feminine, masculine, and androgynous. When the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* ran a contest that asked "What in the world do you say about Fräulein Mia?"[26] the responses were as varied as the photos of New Women that accompanied them. One reader insisted upon the New Woman's feminine identity arguing that "Clothes don't

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[22] Sabine Hake, "In the Mirror of Fashion," in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 187-88.

[23] Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 79-80, 110-32.

[24] Peukert, 99.

[25] Atina Grossmann, "*Girlkultur* or Thoroughly Rationalized Female. A New Woman in Weimar Germany?" in *Women in Culture and Politics: a Century of Change*, eds. Judith Friedlander, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

[26] *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, Nr. 46 (13 Nov. 1927), cover.

make the man; what counts are the naked facts." Another quipped, "Set a mouse upon her tie, how quickly she'll wave her masculinity goodbye." Others drew attention to her masculinity, asking "Say who may the little man be?" and calling her a "Self-made man." Still another declared that her "*Sachlichkeit* (objectivity) transformed into *Sächlichkeit* (neuterness)." Her ambiguity was best described by the reply "That girl looks like a man looks when he looks like a girl."[27]

The New Woman's androgynous appearance, her work outside the home, her pursuit of sexual pleasure without consequences, and her disinclination to motherhood coded her as 'infertile' (which was, ironically, inconsistent with her image as the ideal wife and mother). For example, Monique's sterility in *Garçonne* is only overcome once she gives up her New Woman's lifestyle. Similarly, the lesbian's 'intersexuality' carried with it the assumption that she could not reproduce – this was the reason for Iwan Bloch's lack of concern with her.

The New Woman's enjoyment of sex, her look that was sexualized through the use of make-up and fashion, and her appearance in public unaccompanied by a spouse or chaperone made her sexually suspect and even dangerous. The Weimar marriage 'expert' Dr. Van de Velde remarked that "'free living' women are considered less worthy,"[28] and

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[27] "Setz ihr mal 'ne Maus of den Schlips, wie schnell sie ihre Männlichkeit vergißt.", "Was sagen Sie bloss zu Fraeulein Mia?"and "Det Meechen sieht aus, wie'n Mann aussieht wenn er wie'n Meechen aussieht." (*Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, Nr. 51 [1927]: 2127-28). The remaining translations in this paragraph are taken from Sabine Hake, 196.

[28] Th. H. Van de Velde, *Sex Hostility in Marriage: Its Origin, Prevention and Treatment*, trans. Hamilton Marr (New York: Covici, Friede Publishers, 1931 [1928]),108-9.

films like *The Blue Angel* (1930) and *Pandora's Box*, which portrayed the New Woman as a 'man-eater,' suggested that she belonged to a disreputable social circle. The New Woman had a sexual agency that was denied 'proper' women by those like Van de Velde, who believed that "generally speaking, the woman must be aroused from her passive attitude (apparent frigidity) to active participation in the sexual act by man's skilful [sic] wooing".[29] The New Woman's sexual independence contradicted the formula of "*masculine activity* as kinetic energy . . . and *feminine* as *potential energy*," calling into question the premise of sexual complementarity and the social paradigm but also forcing her heteronormative identification as 'masculinized.'[30]

Likewise, the lesbian was thought to be a sexually aggressive 'virago.' She was regarded by sex researchers to be a seducer of feminine, that is, 'passive' women, who therefore were not considered lesbians.[31] *Der Rote Fahne* reported the story of a lesbian who sexually assaulted her house maid and in Ferdinand Bruckner's play, *Krankheit der Jugend* (*Sickness of Youth*), the lesbian Desiree seduces the very 'motherly' Marie.[32]

Sexual indeterminacy and the distrust that the New Woman's image provoked could

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[29] Ibid., 37; Kisch also cites numerous authorities who assert that German women tended to frigidity and only had their desires awakened after intercourse with a man (168).

[30] Bloch also suggested that the "sperm cell represents the **active**, the germ cell the **passive**, principle in sexuality." (9).

[31] Gudrun Schwarz has examined the emergence of this characterization (as well as its incorporation/adaptation into the heteronormative framework of sexual complementarity) in late 19th and early 20th century Germany. See Schwarz, 137-38.

[32] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Peversitaeten!," *Die Freundin*, 10 December 1930, 1; Ferdinand Bruckner, *Krankheit der Jugend* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1929).

not be separated from the lesbian with whom she shared her origins. The uncertainty about her sexual orientation only made her status that much more perplexing. The New Woman's hybrid nature, the subject of great contemporary interest, correspondingly produced anxiety and fear: "When the modern woman . . . strives fanatically toward equality with the man, and uses the means of fashion to demonstrate her masculinization by suppressing the female and imitating the male secondary sexual characteristics, the sexual instinct is bound to be irritated and enter the dangerous field of perversion."[33] Thus, the New Woman's dangerously indistinct identity, which at times shifted to lesbian identity, existed in a liminal space that provoked both desire and the dread of transgressed boundaries.

**Masculine Identity and the Lesbian**

" . . . the male nature disposes him to the role of master, in that compared to the woman, his nature provides him with more strength of mind and body, as well as special character traits. These predestine him to be the leader."[34]

In the Weimar era, the oppositional relationship between women and men was framed within the idealized concept of "sexual complementarity." Man's supposedly antithetical relationship to woman affirmed his identity and legitimized his superior role. It was not just what he *was* that defined him, but what he *wasn't*. Ironically, it was this insistence upon this difference that produced the notion of the hybrid, whose indeterminacy

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[33] Curt Moreck cited in Hake, 195.

[34] ". . . die Natur dem Manne die Führerrolle auf Erden zuweis, indem sie ihm vor dem Weibe mit größerer Kraft des Geistes und des Körpers sowie besonderen Charaktereigenschaften ausstattete, die ihm zum Führer prädestinieren."(E. F. W. Eberhard, *Die Frauenemanzipation und ihre erotische Grundlagen* [Wien und Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumueller, 1924], 6).

threatened the stability of the gender paradigm and patriarchy itself.

In a popular series of books on "Ideal Marriage", Dr. T. Van de Velde's advice was centred upon the notion of a heterosexual union of opposites. In *Sex Hostility in Marriage*, the second book of the series, Van de Velde devoted five chapters to locating the origin of male and female difference in the sexual process of reproduction and conception. "The dependence of woman upon the man, and in consequence, his supremacy in marriage and in Society [sic]," he claimed, "is based on biological and natural facts."[35]

According to Otto Weininger, every human was a mixture of masculine and feminine types who resided between the poles of the "absolute types". Every person was therefore 'masculinized' or 'feminized' to varying degrees. This continuum broadened the category of 'intermediates' and left the boundaries of the absolute categories unfixed and nebulous. Nevertheless, gender distinctions were maintained. "In the end, despite all the forms of intersexuality, a person is only **one** of the two – **either** man **or** woman".[36]

Even within intermediacy, a system of complementarity was upheld. For example, illustrations in the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* and *Die Dame* showed androgynous women accompanied by androgynous men.[37] The blurred female identity destabilized masculine identity and had an apparent emasculating effect upon the consequently 'feminized' man.

The more that the opposition of genders was insisted upon, the more that the

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[35] Van de Velde, *Sex Hostility*, 78.

[36] "*Trotz allen sexuellen Zwischenformen ist der Mensch am Ende doch* ***eines*** *von beiden,* ***entweder*** *Mann* ***oder*** *Weib*" (Weininger, 94).

[37] Petro, 108,118-19, 120.

category of intermediates expanded. In 1923, the physician, Dr. M. Hirsch, applied a definition of "intersexual' that ranged from any woman with "one or more marked masculine or undeveloped feminine characteristics such as hair growth, . . . shape of face, genitals, mammary glands" to those "whose instinctive emotions are under normal in degree or masculine in direction, . . . even as far as homosexual inclinations."[38]

An incident reported in the lesbian magazine, *Die Freundin,* exemplified the confusion and need to assert difference that intersexuality provoked. According to the magazine, lesbians attending a Ladies' Club Violetta *Dampferpartie* (steam ship party) in July, 1930, had an altercation with a group of off-duty policemen in an adjacent hall. In the rental dispute, the lesbians were struck and at least one was punched in the face. They were also mooned and one man pointed to his crotch and declared "I'm size 8!" By contrast, the same police officers who had assaulted the women, claimed that they had had to take their own "ladies" away to safety. Despite the presence of only one male, a transvestite, in the Violetta club, the Police Major Sander claimed in his group's defense that there had been many men present in female clothing.[39] This suggests that either the assailants perceived the women as masculinized or that the nature of the physical assault was thought to be appropriate only for men. On the other hand, the sexual nature of the taunts seem to have been directed at affirming the 'femaleness' of the lesbians.

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[38] Hirsch cited in Th. H. Van de Velde, *Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique*, trans. Stella Browne (New York: Random House, 1926), 40.

[39] Paul Weber, "Haben die Schupobeamten die Homosexuellen planmaessig ueberfallen?," *Die Freundin*, 23 July 1930, 1; "Bei mir Groesse 8!" (Friedrich Radszuweit, "Homosexuelle schlagen Polizeibeamte nieder!," *Die Freundin*, 30 July 1930, 1).

The notion that lesbians were masculinized – 'inverted females' – led to their characterization as sexually aggressive. Franz Scheda, the author of a contemporary tract on 'Lesbian Love' suggested that their gatherings were "sexfests."[40] In the incident at the Dampferpartie, one woman accompanying the policemen asked loudly, "Frau Schmidt, have you already heard that the group that just arrived is said to be completely sexual!" Apparently Frau Schmidt then cried out "What, sexual? For God's sake, where, then, is my Trude?"[41] Implicit was a moral judgement that normal and proper women were sexually innocent and that improper and abnormal women were dangerously 'sexualized'.[42]

Discursively, the lesbian's hybrid nature, her lack of an absolute or 'pure' gender, suggested that she was "dirty" and "perverse".[43] When the off-duty policemen and their female companions encountered the lesbians at the Dampferpartie, they swore at them, calling them "gay sows" and "abnormal riff-raff".[44] Through her connection to male

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[40] Lotte Hahm, "Die lesbische Liebe," *Die Freundin*, 12 February 1930, 1.

[41] "Frau Schmidt, haben sie [sic] schon gehört, der Verein, der eben angekommen ist, soll vollständig sexuell sein!" and "Was sexuell? Um Gotteswillen, wo ist denn meine Trude?" (Radszuweit, "Polizeibeamte!," 1).

[42] Atina Grossman, "The New Woman and the Rationalization of Sexuality in Weimar Germany," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 158; The idea of the 'normal' woman being sexually naive was pervasive. For example, Van de Velde emphasized the notion of female frigidity and the man's role in arousing a proper sexual interest in women.

[43] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), 59-66.

[44] "Schwule Säue," "anormales Gesindel" (Radszuweit, "Polizeibeamte!," 1).

homosexuality, the lesbian was associated with perverts and criminals.[45] Lesbians were also associated with the often despised Jewess and the prostitute,[46]and with biological degeneracy. For example, in the film *Anna and Elisabeth* (1933) it was suggested that one of the title characters, a lesbian, suffered from a mental and physical pathology.[47] In the words of a character in the play *Gestern und Heute*, a lesbian school girl was "Sick. It is something ugly, sinful in her."[48]

The 'hybridization' of women prompted an attempt to reassert gender differences and it was urged "that sound male judgement take a stand against these odious fashions . . . the look of a sickeningly sweet boy [really a woman] is detested by every real boy or man."[49] It was essential to exclude and eliminate the intermediate and to impose gender homogeneity. "[If the intersexual type marries], the marriage will be deeply unhappy. Scenes will occur in which the husband hits his wife. Naturally, the man aims to pull out what is hidden in the woman: her masculine strain is conquered and she is grateful for the liberation from masculinity. This is the scientific basis for the understanding that beatings are united with love."[50] Other attempts to regulate and suppress lesbian identity included attempts to

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[45] Radszuweit, "Perversitaeten!"1.

[46] Atina Grossmann, "The New Woman," 167.

[47] Dyer, 24-25.

[48] "Krankhaft, es ist etwas Häßliches, Suendiges in ihr."(Karen, "Gestern und Heute," *Garçonne*, 9 [1931], 2).

[49] "Nun aber Genug! Gegen die Vermaennlichung der Frau," *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 13 (29 March 1925), 389.

[50] Dr. J. Loebel cited in Petro, 121.

"cure" homosexuality and extended to lesbian subculture itself.[51] In 1928, the lesbian magazine *Die Freundin* was placed on the list of materials forbidden for public display by the "Trash and Filth Law" (note the reference to dirt).[52]

However, such suppression also produced feelings of desire and an interplay of "incitement and elision."[53] The lesbian press often complained about "*Schaulokale*" ("showplaces") like the club Eldorado, which was well known for its homosexuals and transvestites and catered to the voyeuristic interest of the general public. In fact, the chair of the *Bund für Menschenrechte* (League for Human Rights or BfM) also objected to Magnus Hirschfeld's research as a show of "Abnormitäten"("freaks") that he said only served to titillate the public.[54]

Nevertheless, the medical creation of the category of the lesbian ultimately gave her the means to resist her stigmatization. Through the community and subculture that emerged around her, the lesbian was able to develop an alternative identity that resisted the dominant discourse. This will be the focus of part II.

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[51] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Sie wollen heilen!" *Die Freundin*, 2 December 1931, 1.

[52] "Schund- und Schmutzgesetz".

[53] Stallybrass and White, 152; Foucault, 56.

[54] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Ihr Stammtisch wird lachen...", *Die Freundin*, 17 February 1932, 1; Paul Weber, "Wie Berlins Moral gehoben werden soll!," *Die Freundin*, 19 October 1932, 1.

# Part II

## Chapter 3

## The Homosexual Emancipation Movement and Medical Discourse on Lesbian Identity

"When sexual science began to concern itself with the sexual orientation of humans, it searched for words with which to designate the different variations. That is how names like sadist, mashochist, fetishist, exhibitionist, bisexual, transvestite, homosexual, and so on originated."[1]

Rigidly enforced notions of what defined a 'man' and what defined a 'woman' created a large and poorly defined category of the 'sexual intermediate.' However, just as the categories of 'man' and 'woman' imposed homogenous labels upon individuals, so did the homo-/heterosexual binary. In 1869, when Karl Maria Kertbeny (a.k.a. Karoly Benkert) officially made use of his term 'homosexual,' he created the space for the eventual construction of 'heterosexuality' as a 'normal' category.[2] Lesbianism was then still thought to be rare among women, so the term 'homosexual' presupposed a predominately male group.[3] In the Weimar Republic, when scientists turned their attention to lesbians and

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[1] "Als die Sexualwissenschaft anfing, sich mit den sexuellen Triebrichtung der Menschen zu beschäftigen, da suchte sie nach Worten, um die vershiedenartigen Variationen damit bezeichnen zu können. So enstanden Namen wie Sadist, Masochist, Fetichist, Exhibitionist, Bisexuell, Transvestit, Homosexuell, usw." (F. Mara, "Transvestiten!," *Die Freundin*, 8 January 1930, 1).

[2] Jonathon Katz has argued that originally "heterosexuality" as described by Kertbeny was not normative and that in the late 19th century the term was used by medical 'experts' to describe non-procreative sex between a man and a woman as perverse (*The Invention of Heterosexuality* [New York: Dutton, 1995], 52-5).

[3] This is not to say that no attention was given to female homosexuals prior to the war. In *Psychopathia Sexualis*, R. V. Krafft-Ebing remarked that "So far as the clinical

applied their 'knowledge' of male homosexuality to women, they began to name and construct various categories with which women could identify.

This identity was further developed by the expansion of medical discourse as a whole, particularly into the language of the homosexual emancipation groups like the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (WhK) founded by Magnus Hirschfeld and others in 1897, the Institute for Sexual Science by Magnus Hirschfeld in 1919, and the Bund für Menschenrechte (BfM) in 1923, all based in Berlin. These organizations dedicated themselves to obtaining the repeal of Paragraph 175 and to public education about homosexuality. In addition, the BfM organized homosexual women through regional clubs. The BfM's membership peaked at 45,000 and its first president, Friedrich Radszuweit, was an important publisher of homosexual publications.[4] The relative freedom of the press facilitated greater homosexual contact and identification by linking homosexual men and women throughout the German-speaking countries. They distributed information about homosexual night clubs, social club activities, and films; they serialized homosexual novels, advertised books, drew attention to relevant political issues and disseminated 'scientific' information. Together, various homosexual political and social organizations and the mass media developed and standardized homosexual self-knowledge, the topic of Chapter 4.

However, the proliferation of popular and medical discourse on lesbian identity also

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woman . . ." (von Krafft-Ebing, Richard. *Psycopathia Sexualis* [New York: Medical Art Agency, 1931] [1891], 398). Christiane von Lengerke has suggested, lesbians are (and were) often subsumed within a terminology that implies that homosexual women are the identical counterpart of homosexual men (von Lengerke, 125).

[4] Schoppmann, *Days*, 4.

facilitated the development of many homosexual 'types' or identities. As knowledge about homosexuality grew, so did the number of categories: masculine lesbian, feminine lesbian, transvestite, MannWeib, (ManWoman), Männin (Butch), *gleichgeschlechtlichliebenden Frau* (same-sex loving woman), and so on. The variety of names for women suggests the instability of lesbian identity and the expansion of the discourse. The 'lesbian' in Weimar Germany was not the product of a personal enlightenment concerning an essential identity waiting to be recognized, as the homosexual rights movement liked to suggest. Instead, she was the product of medical, social and cultural discourses. Nevertheless, once established, the category permitted the development of a reverse discourse, which enabled resistance to these same generative discourses. Thus, lesbian identity in the Weimar Republic, and the subculture which its construction fostered, was not the successor to and manifestation of a constant identity. It was a site as fluid and contested as the Weimar Republic itself.

**Medical Discourse**

Since the 19th century, the innate origins of homosexuality had dominated scientific discourse. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the most renowned of the sexual scientists, suggested in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) that homosexuality was an "abnormal congenital manifestation." Later, Magnus Hirschfeld of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee took up the argument that homosexuality was congenital and attempted to use it as a justification for toleration and the acceptance of homosexuality. Hirschfeld argued that it was wrong to persecute people for something which was biologically determined and beyond their control.

However, Hirschfeld's strategy was not completely accepted by everyone in the

homosexual emancipation movement. Benedict Friedländer, a homosexual activist and proponent of "Greek Love" (boy-love and male friendship), and one of the founders of the Community of the Special, strongly disagreed. His group, which sought legal and social freedom in "the area of private love life," wanted to revive "Hellenic" pederasty combined with married family life.[5] Friedländer insisted that arguments like Hirschfeld's were self-defeating: "one can behave humanely to the sick and indeed try to 'heal' them; but at no time does one acknowledge presumed physical inferiors to have equal rights."[6]

Like the WhK, which the Community ultimately opposed, Friedländer's group had its origins in the *Lebensreformbewegung* (Life Reform Movement). The reform movement's nudity cult, of which Friedländer had been a part, challenged dominant sex norms by breaking the taboo on nakedness while also advocating physical health. Politically, the Community of the Special were anarchists who gradually shifted to an anti-Marxist "libertarian socialism."[7] Because of its emphasis on Greek love, the Community was exclusively male and anti-feminist, with the result that most lesbians involved in the homosexual rights movement gravitated towards the scientists' view that their sexual orientation was the result of a congenital anomaly.[8] The Community also had an anti-scientific resentment that brought them into conflict with the WhK. As the historian James

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[5] Steakley, 43.

[6] Friedländer cited in Faderman and Eriksson, xiv.

[7] Steakley, 43.

[8] Faderman and Eriksson, xiv; Not only was Hirschfeld prominent in the movement to decriminalize homosexuality, but he explicitly endorsed the emancipation of women.

Steakley has suggested, these political-ideological features were consistent with their advocacy of same-sex relations and 'Hellenism': "their sexual orientation was totally irreconcilable with modern society."[9]

On the other hand, Hirschfeld's (and the BfM's) efforts on behalf of homosexual rights included active political lobbying as well as the production of educational *Aufklärung* ("enlightenment") films like *Anders als die Anderen* (*Different from the Others*) (1919), and an extensive body of popular and 'scientific' literature on homosexuality. His work increased public attention to homosexuality and as the leader of a high profile organization, Hirschfeld's 'scientific' theories about same-sex love gained broad public exposure.

In 1904, Hirschfeld also theorized that homosexuals constituted a "Third Sex", which was a revision of his earlier belief that it was an 'inversion' of 'normal' sexuality. Later, by about 1910, due to sharp criticism from many quarters, he dropped his Third Sex Theory.[10] Still, in both cases, the terminology about homosexuality was shaped by the prevailing *Weltanschauung* that saw sexuality as innately linked to gender.

Arguing from within the dominant discourse about the innateness of homosexuality, Hirschfeld and the homosexual emancipation movement sought to establish the naturalness of homosexuality. Nevertheless, the homosexual rights movement did succeed in October 1929, in obtaining the government's commitment to repeal Paragraph 175.

The historian Claudia Schoppmann has suggested that for many lesbians the belief that their difference was innate was reassuring. One lesbian she interviewed, Margerete

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[9] Steakley, 45-47.

[10] Ibid., 48.

Knittel, declared that: "Only then [after her first love affair] was I able to accept my nature and that we are just plain different from the others!"[11]

The emphasis upon congenital homosexuality shaped the way that 'experts' understood lesbianism. Magnus Hirschfeld stated that unlike male homosexuality, among women "genuine" homosexuality was rare.[12] In terms which upheld heterosexuality as the norm, he defined genuine homosexuality as an "*absence of normal sexual affinity*" for members of the opposite sex, but with a mental and spiritual resemblance to members of the opposite sex as well as an "*inter-sexual constitution*," which fixed 'true' homosexuality as a biological condition [original emphasis].[13]

Conversely, Hirschfeld suggested that many prostitutes (from 25-50%) were pseudo-homosexuals and that pseudohomosexuality could be caused by a "satiety" for members of the opposite sex; a greater "*physiological bi-sexuality*" in women than in men, making them more comfortable with physical affection from members of the same sex; and external circumstances such as fear of pregnancy, or the absence of male sex partners in, for example, harems, prisons and schools; and the constant desire for stimulation/sensation which was inherent in the feminine nature.[14] In other words, the true homosexual was biologically predisposed to members of the same sex, and had no attraction to the opposite

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[11] Schoppmann, *Days*, 92-93.

[12] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Sexual Anomalies and Perversions: Physical and Psychological Development, Diagnosis and Treatment* (London: Encyclopaedic Press, 1962) [1938], 281.

[13] Ibid., 241.

[14] Ibid., 282-284.

sex; the pseudohomosexual was the creation of external circumstances.

Like Hirschfeld, Iwan Bloch believed in the biological origins of homosexuality, labeling it "a congenital state or one spontaneously appearing in very early childhood" that was not provoked by an external or environmental influence, and that was still to be regarded as mentally and physically "healthy."[15] Bloch also regarded the majority of cases of female homosexuality to be pseudohomosexuality.[16] Bloch asserted that "true homosexuality constitutes a **special well-defined group**, sharply distinguishable from all forms of pseudo-homosexuality" [original emphasis]. He believed that one could frequently (but not always), detect a masculine build (small breasts, narrow pelvis, moustache, deep voice, etc.) in girls. In other cases, only the direction of her sexual impulse revealed her inclination. Furthermore, Bloch asserted that even the true homosexual woman was not homosexual to the same degree as her male counterpart.[17] Popular sex 'experts' like Van de Velde shared this view that female homosexual behaviour was weak.[18] Still, like Hirschfeld, Bloch believed that the difference between genuine and 'psuedo'-homosexuality was that the former was original and indelible, while the latter was prompted by external influences, was transient and could not be attributed to the substance of the personality.[19]

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[15] Bloch, 489-490.

[16] Ibid., 525.

[17] Ibid., 526, 528.

[18] Van de Velde, *Sex Hostility*, 99.

[19] One lesbian recently recalled how Hirschfeld told her personally that her disposition could never be changed (Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 68-69).

According to Bloch, homosexuality could also simply be "apparent," resulting from hermaphroditism or other physical and mental anomalies. Hermaphroditism was explained as the existence of bisexuality, which Bloch defined as "the possibility of two distinct modes of sexual perception occurring in one and the same person," although, like Weininger, he believed that every individual possessed some elements of the opposite sex.[20] Since bisexuality was thought by Bloch to manifest itself most readily during puberty he suggested that boarding schools, barracks and other training schools were likely sites for the occurrence of transient homosexuality. Furthermore, he reported that "The prison is said by Parent-Duchatelet to be a high-school of tribadism."[21] In all cases of sudden and "epidemic" homosexuality, pseudohomosexuality was to be suspected.[22] The case of female prostitution was cited as an example of pseudohomexuality induced by the acquired aversion to men as a result of contact with their coarser side (rather than satiation).[23] Cross-dressing was also regarded as pseudohomosexual (bisexual and fetishistic) if there was no accompanying sexual desire for members of the transvestite's own biological sex.[24] Clearly, the systematization of homosexuality introduced more distinctions, but not clarity to the question of female homosexuality.

The question of innate versus acquired homosexuality had high stakes for the

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[20] Bloch, 539.

[21] Ibid., 540.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 546.

[24] Ibid., 541-545.

homosexual rights movement. Their appeal for rights was based upon the premise that as 'variations in nature' homosexuals deserved toleration not persecution. Women, who had largely been excluded from the category of homosexual identity, because of ideas about female sexual agency and character were increasingly absorbed into it and faced increasing categorizations. As we next consider lesbian subculture, we will see how questions of 'true' and 'pseudo-homosexuality' were appropriated in order to counter popular discourses about homosexual degeneracy and perversity. Together with the popular leisure venues and mass media, the medical discourse played an important role in the emergence and shaping of lesbian identity and its various categories, forming a part of the subculture and the language of identification.

## Chapter 4

### Subculture and the Construction of Identity

Since before World War I, Berlin had been known for its large homosexual subculture. With a population of 4 million by 1920, Berlin was the largest city in the Republic. Not only was it an industrial center, but also the center of the mass media and entertainment industry, which played a significant role in the homosexual rights movement. Important institutions like Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science and publishers like the Friedrich Radszuweit Verlag, which was affiliated with the BfM, were all also based in Berlin. Although Berlin was by far the nucleus of the homosexual subculture, large cities like Hamburg, Cologne, Munich and Frankfurt also had many clubs and bars.[1] The German Friendship Association (*Deutscher Freundschafts-Verband* or DFV) that formed after the war added social activities to the political activities of the WhK and other groups dedicated to homosexual emancipation. The DFV had dances, weekly meetings and published a weekly newspaper, *Die Freundschaft* (*Friendship*).[2] In addition, the Radszuweit Verlag, published the *Blätter für Menschenrecht* (*The Human Rights Paper*), *Die Insel* (*The Island*), and *Die Freundin* (*The Girlfriend*). In the Weimar Republic, there were up to thirty different periodicals for homosexuals,[3] and a publishing industry which produced an astounding quantity of books, not only 'scientific,' but also fiction. There were theatre groups – the first

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[1] Schoppmann, *Days*, 4.

[2] Steakley, 74-76.

[3] Ibid., 78.

was Theatre Eros – and ladies' club-based groups such as the *Spielschar des Klub Monbijou* (The Monbijou Players).[4] Homosexual nightclubs and bars proliferated extensively, and the two travel guides devoted to discussing them attest to their sheer number.

In this context, the term "lesbian" was not a simple and precisely defined term. In fact, as the analysis in the first part of this thesis suggests, during Weimar, lesbian identity was not stable or well-delineated at all. A careful reading of *Die Freundin* and other sources suggests a number of themes revealing the ways in which women who self-identified as lesbian – or "*gleichgeschlechtlichenliebenden Frauen*" as they sometimes called themselves – and their community, represented themselves. This chapter situates lesbians within a particular social community, movement, and set of public concerns such as the repeal of Paragraph 175 and the possible criminalization of lesbianism. Lesbians did not exist in isolation. Their identity was created and supported by the homosexual mass media as well as the popular media to which it responded. The gaze that a guide such as Ruth Margerete Roellig's travel guide or a lesbian magazine such as *Die Freundin* fixed upon lesbians functioned as a stabilizer of lesbian identity. Furthermore, the transvestites, who were also a part of the homosexual community, also shed light on the way in which we can understand lesbians, so they will be discussed here as well.

The relationships between the organized homosexual rights movement, the large number of public leisure and entertainment venues (like clubs, nightclubs), and the extensive publications of the homosexual press, were reciprocal and mutually reinforcing. This network provided the means for women to self-identify and develop a lesbian identity.

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[4] "Rundschau: Der Spielschar-'Orden'," *Garçonne*, 26 (1931), 4.

Indeed, one transvestite stated that after he read the books of Iwan Bloch, Otto Weininger and others, he had the greatest longing to go to Berlin and spend time with people like himself.[5] Thus, the subculture helped create, expand and broaden lesbian identity. It also refashioned it.

**Nightclubs and Damenklubs**

During the 1920s the extensive club scene was large enough to warrant travel guides describing these locales to potential visitors. The first guide to appear was Ruth Margarete Roellig's *Berlins lesbische Frauen* (*Berlin's Lesbian Women*) published in 1928 with a foreword by Magnus Hirschfeld. Roellig's book was not strictly intended to serve as a guide to visitors, as Hirschfeld's contribution and her own introduction suggest. They also sought to educate – to enlighten (provide *Aufklärung*) – the public and homosexuals about homosexuality by describing in the introduction the lesbian's aversion to men, her origins and appearance, and then illustrating this with Roellig's descriptions of women in the nightclubs.[6] Roellig's guide connected women to the lesbian community, providing them with a name and an identity.

In 1931, another travel book, this one by Curt Moreck, *Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin* (*Guide to "depraved" Berlin*) appeared. This guide purported to be a

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[5] Emi M., "Die Welt der Transvestiten: Wie ich Abnehmer der 'Freundin' und des '3. Geschlechtes' wurde," *Die Freundin*, 22 April 1931, 4-5.

[6] Magnus Hirschfeld, foreward to *Berlins lesbische Frauen*, by Ruth Margarete Roellig (Lille: Editions G.K.C. 1992 [1928] ),10; Ruth Margarete Roellig, *Berlins lesbische Frauen*, with a foreward by Magnus Hirschfeld (Lille: Editions G.K.C., 1992 [original 1928] ), 16.

resource for those wishing to acquaint themselves with the pleasures of the city, although precise addresses were not given. In a narrative style, Moreck takes the reader on a 'tour' of Berlin's homosexual locales, as well as heterosexual clubs, restaurants, coffee houses, and the so-called "underworld." The text was accompanied by illustrations from various artists, including George Grosz, Paul Kamm and the lesbian artist Jean Mammen. However the title's reference to "*lasterhaft*" suggests that the author was naming and calling into question the usual characterization of these locales. The publication of these guides serve as indicators of the general public's interest in the homosexual community, but also suggests the inroads which the homosexual subculture made into 'mainstream' society.[7]

The lesbian nightclub and the *Damenklub* (ladies club) provided a form of lesbian

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[7] Curt Moreck, *Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin* (Leipzig: Verlag moderner Stadtführer, 1996 [1931] ). 20; As a contributor to work edited by Magnus Hirschfeld, for example *Zwischen Zwei Katastrophen*, one wonders if Moreck's work was entirely devoted to the interests of tourism. Nevertheless, the author gave no indication that his aim was *Aufklaerung*. As Deborah Smail has noted, the text is a highly problematic source because of its tendency to vacillate between sensationalism and sober observations, sympathy for his subject and negative critique (Deborah Smail, *White-collar Workers, Mass Culture and Neue Sachlichkeit in Weimar Berlin. A reading* [Bern: Peter Lang, 1999], 148). For these reasons, and because Moreck's guide seems to have catered more to a heterosexual audience, I will concentrate on the information found in Roellig's guide. This is not to suggest that her guide is unproblematic. Caution should be used when interpreting her club guide as fact. Indeed, at times there is a fairytale-like quality to Roellig's guide: the stock characters (good and bad), the idealized portrayals, and the glamourization of the city experience. For example, Roellig says of the Dorian Gray club, that "the visitors who come from the greyness of everyday life arrive at an almost wildly bright world -- for one is familiar with the obsession of the child within the woman for that which shimmers and is fairy-tale-like – and she takes this into account" ("die Besucher, die aus dem Grau des Alltags kommen, in eine fast überschwenglich bunte Welt gelangen – denn man kennt die Sucht des Kindes in der Frau nach Schillerndem, Märchenhaftem...und trägt ihr Rechnung") (Roellig, 62). Nevertheless, as a prominent figure in the lesbian community, the images that Roellig presented of lesbians are worth closer examination, particularly as the popularity of her book was such that by 1930 it had gone into a second printing (Schoppmann, *Days*, 134).

sociability and were important (literal) sites of identity formation. Because they enjoyed a close relationship, they are sometimes difficult to distinguish from one another. Nightclubs often provided a meeting place for Damenklubs, which were a kind of social club developed and sponsored by the BfM and/or the DFV. For instance, the Café Prinzeß in Berlin hosted a smoking club (*Der Pfeifenklub*), and also hosted a savings club, a lottery club and a skat club.[8] Bowling clubs were also popular, and one of them was based at Berlin's popular nightclub Zauberflöte (Magic Flute).[9]

In some ways, the Damenklubs served as an adjunct to the attractions found in nightclubs. One of the most popular Damenklubs, was the Zauberflöte's Damenklub Violetta led by Lotte Hahm, a well-known figure in the homosexual rights movement. In one week the Violetta club hosted a "*Damenball mit Bonbonregen*" ("Ladies ball with a rain of bon bons") on Wednesday, a "*Roulettentanz mit Preisverteilung*" ("Dance roulette with Prizes") on Saturday, and a "*Damenball mit Saalpost*" ("Ladies' dance with ballroom mail") on Sunday.[10] "Saalpost" was an activity whereby everyone attending the evening's dance was given a number to wear. At midnight each woman could 'mail' a message to someone else at the club by using their number as an 'address.'[11]

Club events could also be held independently of the nightclub and vice versa. For example, Lotte Hahm organized late night shipboard parties called "*Mondschein*

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[8] Roellig, 130.

[9] Schoppmann, *Days*, 44.

[10] *Die Freundin*, 23 April1930, 7.

[11] Roellig, 112.

*Dampferparties*" ("Moonlight Steamship Parties").[12] Conversely, the nightclubs did not rely entirely upon the Damenklubs to enliven their evenings. They held parties and special theme evenings of their own. For example, Berlin's Monokel-Diele ("*Das Tanzkabarett der Frau*") ("The Women's Dance Cabaret") featured "*Eine Nacht in Sevilla*" ("A night in Seville").[13] Dorian Gray, another Berlin nightclub, had a "*Großer Apachenball*" ("Big Ruffian's Ball") one Saturday and a "*Großes Oktoberfest*" ("Big Octoberfest") on another.[14] At Christmastime there were even *Weihnachtsballs* with gifts for the children that were present.[15]

Nor were Damenklubs confined to a few big cities. Women across Germany, as well as Switzerland and Austria, were encouraged by the BfM to start clubs in their towns and regions. For instance, Zürich, Hamburg, Cologne and Frankfurt am Main all had Damenklubs, as did smaller centres like Leipzig, Breslau, and Düsseldorf.[16] The Ortsgruppen provided a wide range of activities that allowed women (and transvestite men) to meet one another and to build an awareness of the issues affecting homosexuals.[17]

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[12] Lotte Hahm, "Mondschein-Dampferpartei von 'Violetta'," *Die Freundin*, 2 July 1930, 5.

[13] *Die Freundin*, 18 May 1932, 7.

[14] *Die Freundin*, 28 September 1932, 7; *Die Freundin*, 12 October 1932, 7.

[15] Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 82, 90.

[16] *Die Freundin*, 1 March 1933, 6; *Die Freundin*, 3 October 1927, 4; *Die Freundin*, 11 July 1928, 6; *Die Freundin*, 18 February 1931, 5; *Die Freundin*, 29 April 1931, 6.

[17] According to a report in *Die Freundin* there was a transvestite male present at one of the Dampferfahrt events (Radszuweit, "Polizeibeamte!", 1).

One of the most popular activities of the Damenklub Violetta was the "Mondschein-Dampferpartie" which Lotte Hahm organized regularly. Tickets for the event were sold in advance. Club members and unemployed women paid 1 Mark. Their guests paid 1.50 Mark. This must have been expensive since one lesbian recalled that she was not able to take part in one of these excursions and another said that even 50 pfennig for a magazine was beyond her means.[18] Indeed, the economic difficulties of the time made participation in many social activities difficult.[19] Nevertheless, on the evening of the party, the ship was scheduled to leave the Spittelmarkt dock at 9 p.m. for Mugelsee. The passengers then disembarked at the Inselhotel where they would dance in a privately booked hall until 5 or 6 in the morning, return to the steamer to have a quick photograph taken in the sunrise, and sail back to Spittlemark for 7 a.m. The night's entertainment also included cabaret, tombola and an orchestra that accompanied the guests throughout the event.[20]

The number and variety of activities organized by the Damenklub Violetta, to say nothing of the other Damenklubs, is staggering. There was, for example, an auto tour to the Spreewald.[21] The Violetta club also organized a fashion show in which "masculine women were included as models. This show was combined with the Transvestite's fashion show, which featured "Straßenkleidung, Balltoiletten und Maskenkostüme" ("Streetclothes, Evening Wear, and Costumes"), so as to cater to a greater variety of tastes. The event was

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[18] Kokula, 74, 95.

[19] For some examples, see Schoppmann, *Days*, 32,42-44, 94. and Kokula, 82, 90.

[20] Hahm, "Mondschein-Dampferpartie", 5.

[21] *Die Freundin*, 16 July 1930, 4.

followed by a ball with cabaret.[22] Other social events included a "Lotterie-Ball" that featured many prizes and the premiere of "Transvestitenehe" ("Transvestite Marriage"), presumably a play, followed by a ball.[23] Dances or balls were regular events and theatre associations provided activities for those who acted as well as those who attended the performances.[24] In spring and summer, there were trips planned to see the tree blossoms and motorcoach tours to Lake Dämritz that included music, games and swimming.[25] Some club activities were geared towards *Bildung*. There was a course offered on rhythmic gymnastics and weekly discussion groups (*Unterhaltungsabende*).[26] In the summer, the discussion meetings halted in order to allow the sports groups to take up their activities.[27] There were savings clubs and lectures by prominent members of the community, like Elsbeth Killmer, an author and editor of the lesbian magazine *Die Freundin*, lectured about such things as equal rights for homosexual women.[28]

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[22] Lotte Hahm, "Die maennliche Frau," *Die Freundin*, 29 October 1930, 5.

[23] Lotte Hahm, "Klubnachrichten: Das grosse Los," *Die Freundin*, 29 October, 1930, 5; 3 December 1930, 5.

[24] "Aufruf an alle gleichfeschlecthlich liebenden Frauen," *Die Freundin*, 18 September 1929, 1; *Die Freundin*, 15 December 1924, 2.

[25] Lotte Hahm, "Sommerprogramm der Sportgruppe Violetta," *Die Freundin*, 7 May 1930, 2.

[26] "Der Transvestit," *Die Freundin*, 1 October 1924, 2.

[27] Hahm, "Sommerprogramm," 2.

[28] *Die Freundin*, 15 December 1924, 2; "Aufruf an alle gleichgechlechtlich liebenden Frauen," *Die Freundin*, 18 September 1929, 1; Friedrich Radszuweit also gave lectures. See "Achtung Stiftungsfeste!," 7 May 1930, 5.

The Damenklubs served as a way of building community through common experience and informally politicizing the group. Some clubs, such as the Monbijou Ladies Club, were members of the German Friendship Association (DFV), that produced a weekly newspaper, *Frauenliebe*.[29] Songs, such as "Different from the Others," written by Selli Engler, a prominent lesbian community member, were sometimes sung about homosexuals and their emancipation.[30] According to Roellig, "Das Lila-Lied," a song which declared lesbians' difference and eventual liberation, was often sung at Violetta.[31] The lyrics of another song lamented the repression of homosexuals:

"Strictly forbidden is the love

Between you and between me – –

Strictly forbidden – – "[32]

When Roellig's travel guide published song lyrics such as this, she formed a bridge between women interested in the club scene and the political activities of Magnus Hirschfeld and the homosexual rights movement.

Information was disseminated by the BfM through the club network, particularly through prominent people like Lotte Hahm and other leaders in the clubs and in the BfM. They also used their influence within the community to try to politicize and mobilize

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[29] Schoppmann, *Days*, 106.

[30] Ibid., 31-32.

[31] Roellig, 110-11.

[32] "Streng verboten ist die Liebe, Zwischen dir und zwischen mir – – Streng verboten – – " (Ibid., 102).

women. For example in an article appearing in *Die Freundin*, Hahm declared that " Not only dance and social events can bring you equality, but rather struggle is also necessary".[33]

Many women took part in excursions to the nightclubs and Damenklubs. Hilde Radusch, a lesbian and politically active communist, recalled that at Berlin's Toppkeller club "It was so exciting that women from all walks of life came, even actresses. It was always so crowded, and on Fridays you could hardly get in at all.[34] The minimum age of 21 appears not to have been a deterrent. One Anneliese W. recalled that she started going to the Magic Flute Dance Palace when she was 15. When it was raided by the police, she hid out in the kitchen garbage bins.[35] However, not all women liked to visit such locales. One woman feared that the musicians in the orchestra at the *Dampferpartie*, who were almost always men, might reprimand her and her partner.[36] Another lesbian, Branda, interviewed by Ilse Kokula stated that "I felt unwell [there], almost revolted."[37]

**Magazines**

Another significant factor in the forging of lesbian identity were the numerous

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[33] "Nicht nur Tanz und gesellige Veranstaltungen können euch Gleichberectigung bringen, sondern auch Kampf ist nötig" (Lotte Hahm and Friedrich Radszuweit, "Aufruf an alle gleichgeschlechtlich liebenden Frauen," *Die Freundin*, 28 May 1930, 4).

[34] Schoppmann, *Days*, 32.

[35] Ibid., 44.

[36] Kokula, 74-75.

[37] "Ich habe mich unwohl gefühlt, ekelhaft geradezu." (Ibid., 94).

lesbian magazines which together circulated to more than 1 million readers.[38] Some of the many titles included *Ledige Frauen* (*Single Women*), *Frauenliebe* (*Women's Love*), *Blätter für Ideale Frauenfreundschaft* (*Gazette for Ideal Women's Friendships*), *Garçonne*, and the most popular, *Die Freundin* (*The Girlfriend*).[39] These magazines linked women across Germany, Austria and Switzerland and the editors made it a point to reach out to women in "the provinces." They produced the "conditions of visibility for a female reader" that Patrice Petro has suggested could foster a gender identification superceding other differences such as class and economic disparity.[40]

Two magazines, of which copies survive today, are *Die Freundin* and *Garçonne*. *Die Freundin* enjoyed a relatively long period of publication, first monthly and later weekly, from 1924 to March 1933, although with some interruptions. It did not appear at all in 1926 and was discontinued for 12 months between July 1928 and 1929, when the Protection of Youth from Obscene Publications Act (1926) placed the magazine on a list of objectionable material. *Die Freundin* was published by Friedrich Radszuweit and the BfM, of which he was chairman from 1923 until his death in 1932. Radszuweit was also one of the most important publishers of homosexual materials.[41] His magazine was edited by Aenne Weber, the chair of the *Damengruppe* (ladies group) of the BfM, in 1924 and 1925. Eventually the BfM developed a women's section, the *Bund für Frauenrecht* (The League for Women's

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[38] Schoppmann, *Days*, 4.

[39] Ibid., 4; Vogel, 162.

[40] Petro, 134-39.

[41] Schoppmann, *Days*, 4.

Rights) headed by Elsbeth Killmer who assumed editorship of *Die Freundin* in 1926. The *Bund für Frauenrecht* eventually became the *Bund für ideale Frauenfreundschaft* (The League for Ideal Female Friendship), led by Lotte Hahm.[42]

The magazine *Garçonne* was the successor to *Frauenliebe*, a publication that was once the newspaper of the *Deutschen Freundschaftsverband* (the German Friendship League or DFV). *Garçonne* had a much shorter (bimonthly) run, from 1930 to 1932, than its rival, *Die Freundin*. Whereas *Die Freundin* was affiliated with the Damengruppe Violetta, located in Klub Zauberflöte, *Garçonne* was associated with the Damenklub Monbijou (based at the Dorian Gray and later the Hohenzollern). *Garçonne* stopped publication in October 1932, less than a year and a half after having been placed on the list for *Schund- und Schmutzschriften* (List of Trash and Filth Publications), a designation which prevented public display and over-the-counter sales, although there may have been other factors, like a change in editors, that contributed to its demise.[43]

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[42] Vogel, 162, 166.

[43] For a brief and discussion of this, see Schlierkamp, 175-76. Despite the abundance of lesbian publications available during the Weimar period, by December of 1932 *Die Freundin* was claiming that it was the only remaining publication to serve the interests of lesbians ("Woran liegt es?" *Die Freundin*, 14 December 1932, cover). Other than *Garçonne*, the life span of the other publications is difficult to acertain. In addition to other factors such as economics, the publisher Friedrich Radszuweit has been characterized as a merciless businessman who contributed to the ruin of at least two other competitors (Bernd-Ulrich Hergemoeller, *Mann fuer Mann: Biographisches Lexikon zur Geschichte von Freundesliebe und mannmaennlicher Sexualitaet im deutschen Sprachraum* [Hamburg: MaennerschwarmSkript Verlag, 1998], 568). In addition, the cost for *Die Freundin* throughout its 9 years of publication was 20 pfennigs. When *Garçonne* first appeared in 1930 it was a much larger magazine than *Die Freundin* so its price was 30 pfennigs. Towards the end of 1931 it reduced its price to 20 pfennigs. This could have been an adjustment to reflect its scaled-down size, or it might have been a response to the increasing economic pressure in German society, or perhaps a

Magazines were relatively easy to access by subscription or could be purchased at newsstands. Still, this does not mean that there was no stigma associated with them. One woman, for example, testified that she bought the magazine with fear and hid it from view at all times.[44] Another took precautions by purchasing it at a kiosk where she was unknown, hiding the magazine "as though you had a bomb in your pocket" and then reading it in secrecy in the bathroom, making sure to conceal it under her blouse afterwards.[45]

Even when magazines where sold at newsstands the issue of whether or not they could be publically displayed was an ongoing and contentious one. At various times the Youth Office (*Jugendamt*) tried to prevent *Die Freundin* from being displayed at newsstands, so that variously the magazine cover proclaimed either that it could be openly displayed or it advised readers that the magazine was still available even if it was not visible at the vendor.[46] The Jugendamt had an even more significant impact upon *Die Freundin* between July of 1928 and June of 1929. The magazine had been placed on the list of

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combination of both these factors. Regardless, 20 pfennigs was apparently too much for some women who recalled that they could not afford to buy magazines regularly. Marte X, who recollected this in an interview with Ilse Kokula, stated (erroneously) that *Die Freundin* cost 40 pfennigs, rather than the actual 20 pfennigs. Another woman interviewed, Branda, made a similar mistake stating that she could not afford to read the magazine regularly because it cost 50 pfennigs (Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 74, 95). I presume that the erroneous inflation reflected the reality that for both of these women the price was significantly beyond their means.

[44] Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 75.

[45] "als hättest du eine Bombe in der Tasche" Ibid., 95.

[46] "Diese Zeitschrift darf überall öffentlich ausgehängt werden!" or "Dieses Blatt darf überall sichtbar ausgehängt werden!"and "Jeder Straßenhandler führt 'Die Freundin' auch wenn dieselbe nicht sichtbar ausgehängt ist. Darum fordern Sie überall 'Die Freundin'. "

"Schund and Schmutz" but vendors had not been informed of this, so they continued to display the magazine. As a result they were issued steep fines. The publishers of *Die Freundin* became aware of this, and stated that rather than place vendors at further risk of prosecution, they would suspend publication altogether.[47]

Informal distribution helped to make lesbians aware of the existence of the magazines. One woman first encountered the periodical when she went to one of the lesbian locales and found it placed on the toilet.[48] In fact, the publisher of *Die Freundin* encouraged readers to leave the magazine in public places for others to find: "Let it travel ... Give *Die Freundin* to others! Advertise me [the magazine] so as to spread our newspaper!"[49]

This helped the publisher to reach out to members of the homosexual community, but it was also intended as a means to spread "*Aufklärung*" or Enlightenment to the general public about homosexuality. One fictional story described how a previously benighted family in a small town came to an understanding and acceptance of their lesbian daughter after she and her girlfriend left copies of *Die Freundin* and other *Aufklärungs*-material out for them to read.[50] Even some readers urged that *Die Freundin* and other literature be

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[47] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Die Freundin, heute letzte Ausgabe", *Die Freundin*, 25 June 1928, 3.

[48] Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 74.

[49] "Last sie wandern...gebt 'Die Freundin' andern! Werbt mir für die Verbreitung Eurer Zeitschrift!" ( *Die Freundin*, 2 Nov. 1932, 6).

[50] Katrin v. Deeren, "Was Leena in Berlin gefunden hat," *Die Freundin*, 12 March 1930, 1-2.

circulated to "normal" circles to further "Enlightenment."[51] Of course, unwittingly coming into contact with such literature would also have facilitated the process of women's self-identification as lesbians.

Lesbian magazines also played a significant role in supporting and maintaining the development of other elements of the subculture such as films, books, clubs and nightclubs. Each issue of both *Die Freundin* and *Garçonne* devoted one or more pages (in *Die Freundin*, usually at least two pages) to advertising these things. Sometimes their mutual influence was evident, indicating the breadth and symbiotic relationship of the various parts of the subculture. For example, the nightclub Manuela, which was advertised in *Die Freundin*, presumably took its name from the lesbian protagonist in the film *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931), which told the story of a school girl's love for her teacher. The film condemned the Prussian discipline and authoritarianism that punished her love.[52] Another club advertised in the magazine was called *Blauen* [sic] *Engel*, presumably after the vampish Marlene Dietrich's film *Der blaue Engel* (1930).[53]

Magazines sometimes explicitly used their influence to support certain nightclubs. *Die Freundin* accepted only advertisements from members of the BfM and exhorted its readers to patronize only those clubs whose names appeared in the publication.[54] This injunction could have been, in part, to benefit the publisher in securing advertising. Yet the

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[51] Mimi, "Was wir Transvestiten leiden," *Die Freundin*, 14 May 1928, 2.

[52] *Die Freundin*, 10 February 1932, 7.

[53] *Die Freundin*, 25 February 1931, 5.

[54] *Die Freundin*, 23 December 1931, 4.

need for club advertisers to hold BfM memberships undoubtably also furthered the advancement of the homosexual rights movement by increasing membership in the BfM. In addition, it addressed the fears of lesbians that they might be exposed (or "outed") by heterosexuals (encouraging an 'us' versus 'them' identity) who visited nonexclusive clubs in order to participate in what they regarded as a fashionable or titillating trend that they could tell their friends about.[55] Eldorado was a particularly notorious locale that *Die Freundin* warned its readers about visiting.[56] The magazine, then, provided its readers with some measure of security against involuntary exposure but also encouraged participation in, and the expansion of, the lesbian subculture. It also attempted to undercut the popular notion that homosexuals were abnormal "*Schauobjekte*" ("objects of display") rather than normal human beings arising from nature as the magazine frequently asserted.

Book advertisements also comprised a significant part of lesbian magazines. This was particularly true of *Die Freundin*, probably owing to its association with Radszuweit Verlag. Not only were the advertisements a regular feature, but they also reflected a broad range of titles and interests. There was a large complement of fiction with well-known titles such as Maximiliane Acker's *Freundinnnen* (*Girlfriends*) and Grete von Urbanitzki's *Der wilde Garten* (*The Wild Garden*). Each volume of Anne Elisabeth Weirauch's trilogy *Der Skorpion* was available as were novels that presented a less flattering image of lesbians such as Alfred Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* (*The Two Girlfriends and their Murder by Poisoning*). There were books for those interested in sadism and masochism, with

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[55] P. W., "Schauobjekte," *Die Freundin*, 18 January 1933, cover.

[56] Radszuweit, "Stammtisch," 1.

enduring volumes such as *Das Grausame Weib* (*The Cruel Woman*), and predictable titles such as *Unter der Peitsche der Leidenschaft* (*Under the Whip of Passion*). Under the same heading, there were also some curious selections such as Dr. Iwan Bloch's *Die Prostitution.* Transvestitism was another category that readers could choose from. The presence of a considerable number of physician authors suggests that medical/scientific books on sexuality were as popular as fiction, and only a small number of these could be termed 'self-help' books.[57] Sometimes the books were not connected to sexuality at all, like *Die russische Grausamkeit* (*Russian Cruelty*) which discussed corporal and capital punishment, but which might have appealed to sadistic or masochistic tendencies. Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* remained permanently on the booklist after it appeared in German as *Quell der Einsamkeit.* In addition to these, many other titles were made available through the Friedrich Radszuweit Verlag, including the novel he authored himself, *Männer zu verkaufen* (*Men for Sale*).

This self-serving relationship between the magazine and the publisher helped to expand lesbian subculture. Certainly it did so by creating an actual business that catered to and could disseminate literature widely, but the variety of books available also broadened the identity. Although they appeared infrequently, the book reviews that were published in the *Die Freundin* served to generate interest in homosexual literature, particularly as the reviews were invariably positive plot summaries.[58] Most importantly however, in addition

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[57] "Buecher die die Freundin empfiehlt," *Die Freundin*, 16 April 1930, 5.

[58] For examples see Dorothea Wendland, "Buecher der homoerotischen Frau," *Die Freundin*, 21 August 1929, 2-3 and Walter Bahn, "Grausamkeit und Bestialitaet, von Dr. B. Schidloff," *Die Freundin*, 1 January 1930, 1.

to supporting the expansion of the subculture, books provided the means for women to self-identify as lesbians. In a letter to *Die Freundin*, a reader by the name of Charlotte Falk who lived in a small town, discussed her past loneliness. She commented that she "had only one joy at that time, the book *The Scorpion*. I love it. With it, I feel that I belong to you, that no one can tear the innate feeling of happiness out of the heart."[59]

The important role that magazines like *Die Freundin* played in developing and expanding lesbian subculture, and hence identity, is not to be underestimated. *Die Freundin* was referred to as "*unsere kleine Zeitung*" ("our little newspaper"),[60] indicating not just the affection that women had for the publication, but also suggesting the role that it played as a "newspaper" in the community, providing information about important political developments, social events, reader's opinions and news in general. Film and theatre news and reviews of interest to lesbians also occasionally appeared in the magazine. The *kleine Zeitung* was more than just a guide to city life; it linked women across Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Of course, taken as a whole it served as one of the forums in which a collective homosexual identity was developed. Together, the books, films, magazines and nightclubs created the infrastructure that supported a lesbian identity.

The actual contents of a popular and well-established magazine like *Die Freundin* played a large role in developing lesbian identity. I have already mentioned the

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[59] "Hatte dann nur eine Freude, das Buch 'Der Skorpion', das liebe ich, ich fühle dabei, ich gehöre zu euch, daß man ein angeborenes Glücksempfinden nicht aus dem Herzen reißen kann." (Charlotte Falk, "Briefe an die Freundin!" *Die Freundin*, 12 August 1931, 4).

[60] Kokula, *Jarhe des Gluecks*, 74.

advertisements for books and clubs that encouraged participation in the homosexual community and promoted lesbian self-identification, but what was actually discussed in the magazine warrants closer examination. What was a woman buying when she purchased *Die Freundin*? What were the messages and themes contained in the magazine?

When *Die Freundin* first appeared on August 8, 1924, the first issues contained no statement of its vision or purpose, but in its third issue, the publisher and editors identified their goal for the magazine to be an independent periodical for women. In addition, they stated that *Die Freundin* would speak out for women's equality within society. It would foster "ideal female friendship" and, to this end, would publish appropriate articles. Readers were urged to send contributions.[61] The magazine's subtitle billed it as a periodical for "*Freundschaft, Recht und Freiheit*" ("Friendship, Justice and Freedom").

Frequently, after publication was restored in 1929, the inside first page of the magazine was devoted to an editorial. Later, when photos no longer appeared on the magazine's cover, the editorials appeared there instead. However, regardless of the placement, there were always topical and news items within the magazine. Sometimes, especially in the first years, these were unsigned, but they were often written by Friedrich Radszuweit, or after Radszuweit's death, Paul Weber, also of the BfM. Authors such as Elsbeth Killmer and Johanna Elberskirchen also contributed, as did many others.

The issues discussed in the editorials often related to the effort to secure the repeal of Paragraph 175, the law criminalizing male homosexuality. This theme provoked discussion on a broad range of topics pertaining to upcoming elections and the political

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[61] *Die Freundin*, "Zur Beachtung!" 15 September 1924, 2.

parties who supported the repeal of Paragraph 175 and to how the medicalization of homosexuality undermined the efforts for decriminalization.[62] Or instead of an article, there might be a brief call to members to join in the fight against the extension of the Austrian legislation against lesbianism into Germany through legal *Gleichschaltung* (standardization) between the countries.[63] There was also concern about new laws which would infringe upon the rights of homosexuals, like laws about creating a public nuisance or restricting male dancing.[64] This suggested that homosexuals conceived of themselves as full members of German society – as citizens with the same rights as other Germans – who should not be singled out. One editorial commented that "The homosexual man who goes with underaged [boys] remains a German citizen, in exactly the same way that the heterosexual who engages in similar activities does."[65] And the chair of the BfM declared about the harassment of a

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[62] Paul Weber, "Sollen wir waehlen?" *Die Freundin*, 2 November 1932, 1; Friedrich Radszuweit, "Homosexualitaet ein medizinisches Fragment?"*Die Freundin*, 1 July 1931, 1.

[63] "Aufruf an die gleichgeschlechtlichenliebenden Frauen Deutschlands!" *Die Freundin*, 20 February 1928, 3.

[64] See "Erregung oeffentlichen Aergernisses," *Die Freundin*, 3 Juni 1931,1, about deficiencies in Paragraph 183, the law against creating a public nuisance; and Paul Weber, "Ausnahmebestimmung gegen Homosexuelle,"*Die Freundin*, 12 October 1932,1, about an attempt to restrict male homosexuals from dancing together where they could possibly be seen by the public.

[65] "Auch der homosexuelle Mann, der sich an Minderjaehrigen vergeht, bleibt immer ein deutscher Staatsbuerger, genau so wie der Heterosexuelle, der ebensolche Taten ausfuehrt." (Friedrich Radszuweit, "Ein Jahr vier Monate Gefaengnis," *Die Freundin*, 19 November 1930, 1).

homosexual: "B. is a German citizen and has the right to live wherever it suits him."[66]

Editorial writers frequently also suggested that heterosexual morality was much looser than that of homosexuals. This was part of a strategy to expose heterosexuals' hypocrisy in selectively labeling homosexuals as 'immoral' and 'perverse.' The magazine's writers complained that "Homosexuality is always regarded as the greatest sensation."[67] Describing the *Dresdner Volkszeitung*'s reporting of a murder, Paul Weber complained that "Had it been about a relationship between a man and a woman, the deed would have been immediately judged correctly – namely as it really it is – a common murder, only this one affected a homosexual person."[68] One article in *Die Freundin*, entitled "Die Unmoralischen" ("The Immoral") pointed to the high incidence of children and youth infected with venereal disease by their fathers and through prostitution. The author argued that "on average, homosexual people are much more moral than heterosexuals."[69] In another article, it was reported that the police had discovered a "Sadist's club" that was fronting as "Rohleder's language school." According to Radszuweit the 'school' was still in operation, suggesting

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[66] "B. ist deutscher Staatsangehörigen und hat das Recht zu wohnen, wo es ihm passt" (Paul Weber, "Ein Deutscher wegen Homosexualitaet ausgewiesen," 25 January 1933, 1).

[67] "Homosexualität gilt immer als die größte Sensation" (Friedrich Radszuweit, "Die Grosse Sensation," *Die Freundin*, 9 December 1931, 1).

[68] "Hätte es um ein Verhältnis zwischen Mann und Frau gehandelt, so wäre die Tat sofort richtig beurteilt worden, nämlich was sie auch wirklich ist, ein gemeiner Mord, nur um an einem homosexuellen Menschen sich zu bereichern." (Paul Weber, "Gemeiner Mord an einem Homosexuellen," *Die Freundin*, 14 October 1931, 1).

[69] "die homosexuellen Menschen im Durchscnitt viel moralischer sind, als die Heterosexuellen." ("Die Unmoralischen," *Die Freundin*, 3 September 1930, 1).

the hypocrisy behind the selective criminalization and prosecution of homosexuality.[70]

Some articles, particularly in 1931 and after, were especially critical of newspapers like the SPD's *Vorwärts* and the *Münchener Post*, which increasingly used homosexuality as a slur with which to discredit the Nazis, declaring "Huch Hitler!"[71] In another story entitled "The Third Sex Greets the Third Reich," the Berlin weekly paper, *Die Welt am Montag*, referred to an article by Friedrich Radszuweit in the *Freundschaftsblatt*, and accused him of being a supporter of Hitler.[72] Nevertheless *Die Freundin* sometimes addressed itself to the hypocrisy of the NSDAP concerning homosexuality.[73] Still, the Nazi slur put the magazine into the reactionary (and cruelly ironic) position of defending the National Socialists against the SDP who actually supported the repeal of Paragraph 175 but who were 'making political hay' with the revelations about Röhm's homosexuality.[74] Furthermore, this illustrates the complexities facing homosexual voters who were also

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[70] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Sadistenklub in der Friedrichstadt," *Die Freundin,* 12 November 1930, 1.

[71] The word "Huch" has no good English equivalent. It suggests shock or surprise but can also imply homosexuality or campiness; (Friedrich Radszuweit, "Huch Hitler!" *Die Freundin*, 9 September 1931, 1).

[72] "Das dritte Geschlecht grüßt das Dritte Reich" (Ibid.). In some respects this was true: Radszuweit was hostile to Jews and he reportedly once wrote a naive personal letter to Hitler, appealing to him to end the harassment of the BfM and homosexuals. Hitler supposedly passed this on to the S.S. with the note: "Bei Machtuebernahme zu liquidieren" ("To be liquidated upon the takeover of power") (Hergemoeller, 568).

[73] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Amor im braunen Haus," *Die Freundin*, 29 July 1931, 1.

[74] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Hauptmann a. D. Roehm," *Die Freundin*, 30 March 1932, 1.

reminded that Hitler seemed indifferent to Röhm's sexuality and continued to entrust him with a high-ranking position.[75]

As a women's magazine, *Die Freundin* obviously also concerned itself with issues more specifically related to them. It sometimes discussed "*Mädchenhandel*" (white slavery) or prostitution.[76] A more common theme was female 'comradeship,' which related directly to the magazine's stated goal of promoting "ideal female friendship." Certainly this 'type' of lesbianism reflected the discursive tendency to configure lesbians as the female counterpart to male homosexuality – in this case, Greek Love and male fraternity. However it also suggested something deeper and more noble than simply a sexual relationship.

Furthermore, a change in the way in that the subject of friendship was treated indicates the formativeness of lesbian identity. Initially the editors of *Die Freundin* had posed the question "Is the woman capable of friendship?" and invited readers to respond.[77] To this question, one reader, Maria Ziebarth, replied essentially that sometimes women could manage real friendships, but most of the time, not. Another woman, E. H., also

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[75] Ibid.

[76] See, for example, the October 1, 1924, November 15, 1924 and 16 October 1929 issues of *Die Freundin.* There were also club discussions held on this theme (*Die Freundin*, 5 March 1930).

[77] The gynecologist Dr. von Siebold, who wrote *Briefen über die Psychologie des Weibes* (1862) had repopularized a Richard Weißbach theory that women could not have friendships in the same way that men could. Siebold believed that women did not share secrets and feelings in the same way that men did and he believed that they hated as much as they loved; "Ist die Frau Freundschaft fähig?" ("Ist die Frau Freundschaft fähig?", *Die Freundin*, 1 October 1924, 5).

replied in the negative.[78] However, several years later in a lead article, the magazine asserted that without doubt female friendships were possible and plentiful,[79] suggesting that the notion of female friendship was becoming entrenched within lesbian identity.

Surprisingly, there were few articles that programmatically outlined female homosexuality, but in 1924, Aenne Weber's "Die homosexuelle Frau" stated that there were two types of homosexual women: the "virile" (the masculine) and the feminine. According to Weber, the virile lesbian was independent and career-minded, often holding remarkably responsible work posts. Her work could measure up to any man's, although typically she had no affinity for housework. She often assumed the role of protector of other women, but, it was commented, only after she had thoroughly checked that a friendship is possible.[80]

The feminine woman, on the other hand, was the exact opposite of the virile. She was truly feminine ("*Echt weiblich*"). She was dependent, had a clingy character, but was also a very skilled "housewife" with excellent taste. However, just as the virile woman was too independent, the feminine lesbian was too delicate. She was especially shy with men, whom she was not comfortable even talking to. On the other hand, the virile lesbian enjoyed her ability to engage intellectually with her male equals.[81]

Similarly, in another article, "Mannweiber" were referred to as "Women who feel

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[78] Maria Ziebarth, "Ist die Frau der Freundschaft faehing?," *Die Freundin*, 1 November 1924, 5; E. H., "Ist die Frau der Freundschaft faehig?" *Die Freundin*, 1 November 1924, 5.

[79] K. F., "Freundschaft zwischen Frauen," *Die Freundin*, 13 November 1929, 1.

[80] Aenne Weber, "Die homosexuelle Frau," *Die Freundin*, 8 August 1924, 6.

[81] Ibid.

like men in their nature and disposition." The article then went on to describe cross-dressing women in history, one of whom surreptitiously married another woman, and many others whose inclination extended only so far as a desire to engage in masculine pursuits like sports or joining the military. The article also described cross-dressing men.[82]

Other articles specifically demarcated other identities. For instance, in a series that ran in 1930, homosexuals were defined somewhat obviously as "Men and women who love [members] of their own sex." Bisexuals were said to be "those people in whom the direction of their [sexual] drive alternates between concentrating on men and women," and transvestites were said to be people "who feel the drive within themselves to put on the clothes of the other sex. That is, men who like to wear women's clothing and women who like best to wear men's clothing."[83] Moreover, the transvestite had the inner constitution (*"führt das Seelenleben"*) of the opposite sex and therefore wore the clothing of the opposite sex in order to demonstrate this on the surface.[84]

A visible manifestation of some of these identities was the various cover illustrations

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[82] "Frauen, die sich ihrer Natur und Veranlagung nach als Männer fühlten" ("Mannweiber in der Geschichte der Neuzeit," *Die Freundin* [*Der Transvestit* Sonderteil], 15 September 1924, 1-2).

[83] "solche Menschen, deren Triebrichtung sich abwechselnd auf Männer und Frauen konzentriert", "die den inneren Drang in sich fühlen, die Kleidung des andern Geschlechts anzulegen, also Männer, die gern Frauenkleider und Frauen, die am liebsten Männerkleidung tragen.", (F. Mara, "Transvestiten!" *Die Freundin*, 8 January 1930, 1); Definitions for sadists, masochists, fetishists and exhibitionists were also provided.

[84] F. Mara, "Transvestiten!" *Die Freundin*, 22 January 1930, 1.

that appeared on most issues of *Die Freundin*.[85] In order to appeal to customers they had to be eye-catching, but they also had to project an image that the consumer desired and could identify with. The array of photographs presented over the years suggests that the lesbian community was comprised of a great variety of women and that over time their identity was elaborated into one that was more complex.

In its first year, the covers of *Die Freundin* offered a variety of representations from the sexual to those of idealized motherhood. They reflected a contained sexuality. The women in the pictures tended to be photographed from a distance, particularly if the image featured frontal nudity (Figure 1). When the images of women were close-up or tightly framed, then there was either no nudity (instead, a woman could be holding her clothing in front of her), or if the model was fully nude then she was photographed from a side angle or from behind.[86]

Three years later, by 1927, the images of women were more explicitly sexual. Photographs of bare breasted women were the norm.[87] Although the variety always seemed to expand, many images were reused – not just once or twice, but many times over. Most of the images appeared closely cropped and even when the model did not look at the viewer, her body was turned so as to reveal her breasts (Figures 2 - 4). Sometimes the models were

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[85] With the exception of the first few issues and the last five months before the magazine's demise.

[86] *Die Freundin*, 15 September, 1924, cover; *Die Freundin*, 15 October 1924, cover; *Die Freundin*,15 November 1924, cover; *Die Freundin*, 15 December 1924, cover.

[87] Issues from the year 1925 were unavailable and in 1926, for unknown reasons, the magazine was not published.

photographed in groups of three women rather than alone.[88] Many of the poses appeared staged leaving one with the sense that the models were playing to the camera, heightening the sense of eroticism (Figure 5).

Still, this is not to say that all subtlety had been lost. Often the nudity was more suggestive than explicit: women's bodies were concealed in shadow or conversely showed the figure in a dark silhouette (Figure 6),[89] or they turned their backs towards the camera, making their breasts only slightly visible.[90]

Gradually, the magazine added to its repertoire of images and themes, incorporating a greater variety of female representations. Oriental exoticism imbued the picture of "S'en Marona, orientalische Tänzerin" ("S'en Marona, oriental dancer"), a dark-haired, dark-eyed woman whose naked pose in a beaded collar, belt, arm- and wrist-cuffs evoked an Egyptian hieroglyphic figure (Figure 7).[91]

Diverging completely from these images was the "*Bildnis der Gräfin X*" ("portrait of Countess X"), a 'traditional' looking woman unfashionably dressed, with long hair tied

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[88] *Die Freundin*, 3 October 1927, cover; 31 October 1927, cover.

[89] For examples see *Die Freundin*, 4 March 1931, cover; 18 Mach 1931, cover; 25 March 1931, cover; 1 July, 1931 cover; 19 August 1931, cover; 9 September 1931, cover; 30 September 1931, cover; 14 October 1931, cover; 4 November 1931, cover; and 18 November 1931, cover.

[90] For examples see *Die Freundin* 13 May 1931, cover; 10 June 1931, cover; 23 September 1931, cover; 7 October 1931, cover; 25 November 1931, cover; 2 December 1931, cover; and 9 December 1931, cover.

[91] *Die Freundin*, 5 March 1928, cover.

back into a smooth profile of her head (Figure 8).[92] Like so many of the other photographs that appeared on the cover of *Die Freundin*, this image was repeated several times. On the other hand, a picture of a statue of a mother with two children to my knowledge, only ever appeared once.[93]

One noticeable trend in *Die Freundin* was the increase of photos in natural settings.[94] These photos were reminiscent of those which filled the Lifestyle Reform Movement's films, such as *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* (*Paths to Strength and Beauty*) (1925), and numerous periodicals. The movement's eugenic and maternalist strain idealized the beauty of fit and healthy female bodies, which were depicted under the guise of wholesome nudity, in semipornographic ways, unclothed and performing some kind of gymnastic or light exercise.[95] However, the women shown on the covers of *Die Freundin* lacked the dynamism and enthusiasm shown in the Reform Movement's images (Figure 9).[96] One particularly striking example was the photo of an entirely nude, short-haired woman seated on a horse in a ranch-like setting (Figure 10).[97]

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[92] *Die Freundin*, 11 July 1928, cover; *Die Freundin*, 7 August 1929, cover. She might possibly have been a male transvestite.

[93] *Die Freundin*, 1 December 1984, cover.

[94] For examples see *Die Freundin*, 22 April 1931, cover; 28 October 1931, cover; 25 November 1931, cover; 16 December 1931, cover.

[95] Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Brith Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 27-28.

[96] For an example see *Die Freundin*, 12 March 1930, cover.

[97] *Die Freundin*, 30 April 1930, cover.

Not surprisingly, many of these images of 'feminine' women replicated traditional roles and representations. 'Feminine' women were most often, but not always, represented as objects of sexual desire, as were the 'oriental' and 'exotic' women. The flowers, veils, jewelry and mirrors that they used as props signaled their interest in personal beauty and their attractiveness to others. However, unlike traditional 'feminine types,' many of the women shown on the cover of *Die Freundin* might have been considered sexually 'aggressive' in the direct way that they looked at viewers or played to the camera. One frequently repeated photograph was "Traumbild" ("Dream picture"), which showed a woman lying on a bed and 'dreaming' of the women whose faces appeared above her body (Figure 11). This was not the image of a sexually naive woman waiting for a man to arouse her sexual passions. Nor were the magazine's buyers sexual innocents. Nude or semi-nude women were most frequently represented on the covers of *Die Freundin* because readers had requested this.[98]

Furthermore, although many of the 'feminine' women in these illustrations wore Bubikopf, not all of them did. When the women had long hair they also tended to be posed more naively or in a natural outdoor setting. One might speculate that short hair was considered to be more 'urban.'

However, some of the urban 'glamour' shots tended to emphasize fashion over sexuality, like the photograph of two New Women standing on the street in 'boxy' dresses as though they were coming from work (Figure 12).[99] By contrast, another type of "La

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[98] "Warum denn das?" *Die Freundin*, 15 October 1924, 1.

[99] *Die Freundin*, 14 May 1928, cover.

Garçonne," as the photograph was entitled, featured a bohemian-looking woman in floral hat. She was seated in front of a mirror in a casual pose with her trousered legs crossed and a cigarette thrust into the side of her mouth (Figure 13).[100] A third image of a New Woman was unusually androgynous. The so-called "modern woman!" ("Die moderne Frau!") as the magazine proclaimed her, had short hair, was heavily made-up and wore an officer's suit and cap (Figure 14).[101] Even in *Die Freundin*, the New Woman's image was ambiguous and contradictory.

Sometimes the cover of *Die Freundin* presented local celebrities like Lotte Hahm or Teddy, the manager of the club Geisha, instead of professional models. Teddy's photo appeared with the caption "The woman as a man" ("Die Frau als Mann") (Figure 15).[102] Both women appeared in men's clothing and their occupations were listed. Over the years, several other 'masculinized.' models were featured although these were not the dominant representations.[103] However, of all the models who did appear on the cover of *Die Freundin* only the masculinized women (and Friedrich Radszuweit) were shown with their real names.[104]

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[100] *Die Freundin*, 28 May 1928, cover; *Die Freundin*, 17 July 1929, cover.

[101] *Die Freundin*, 19 March 1930, cover.

[102] *Die Freundin*, 2 July, 1929, cover; *Die Freundin*, 23 October 1929, cover; When Friedrich Radszuweit died in April, 1932, his portrait was reproduced and framed with the black border of a death notice (*Die Freundin*, 13 April 1932, cover); *Die Freundin*, 4 February 1931, cover.

[103] *Die Freundin*, 28 August 1929, cover.

[104] Presumably the male transvestite Gert Lo Werden was not using her real name (*Die Freundin*, 5 August 1931, cover).

Another such example was Vilma West, who was photographed in a white sailor suit (Figure 16). In one of the few instances in which the cover image corresponded to the magazine's contents, an accompanying article told the story of the 18 year-old Brooklyn woman from a "good family" who was forced to marry the man whom she later killed with a hammer.[105] The article treated West's death sentence as a miscarriage of justice stemming from fear and ignorance about same-sex love. In this context, then, West's defiant stare on the cover of the magazine served as a symbol of resistance to the legal system and the social system which allowed her parents to try to 'normalize' her through marriage.

The cover of *Die Freundin* could also be used for advertising. For example, the title illustration of Anna Elisabeth Weirauch's book latest volume in *Der Skorpion* appeared there,[106] and illustrations from the monthly periodical *Das 3. Geschlecht* provided at least three illustrations of male transvestites used on the cover of the magazine (Figure 17).[107] (Both publications were available from the Friedrich Radszuweit Verlag)

For many years *Die Freundin* had featured an insert for transvestites in its magazine and their photos often appeared inside. But their presence on the cover reinforced the message that the lesbian community – the community of "Girlfriends" – was not strictly limited to members of the female sex. Those with female 'natures' were included as well. Whereas previously there had been the occasional image of a woman in male drag on the

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[105]"Aus Liebe zur Freundin den Mann erschlagen," *Die Freundin*, 2 April 1928, 4.

[106] *Die Freundin*, 4 June 1930, cover.

[107] *Die Freundin*, 8 June 1932, cover.

cover, now there were also men dressed in woman's clothing.[108]

Finally, in November, 1932, with no explanation whatsoever, *Die Freundin* ceased to publish photographs on its title page.[109] Only once more, in March 1933, did a photograph grace the magazine's cover: it was a picture of Friedrich Radszuweit's grave. In fact, illustrations inside the magazine were discontinued as well. I have discovered no contemporary or scholarly explanation for these developments.

Clearly, however, the identities displayed on the cover of *Die Freundin* often mimicked and elaborated the simplified lesbian identities described by Weber in 1924. Women who purchased the magazine were offered an increasing variety of images to identify with, expanding the magazine's audience. For example, the visual diversity in the book *Das 3. Geschlecht* appealed greatly to one reader who especially liked the photographs of transvestites in everyday clothing, because they approximated the "actual" feminine ideal as opposed to simply dressing up as an artistic display.[110] Another reader stated that he cut out the photographs and carried them with him.[111]

Small 'news' items that discussed the topics of interest to lesbians, transvestites, or both were also in each issue of *Die Freundin*. Sometimes they appeared under the headings "Die Freundin plaudert" ("Die Freundin chats") or "Tagebuch der Zeit" ("Diary of the

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[108] *Die Freundin*, 28 August 1929, cover.

[109] *Die Freundin*, 2 November, 1932, cover.

[110] Vera von Roman, "Dei Welt der Transvestiten," *Die Freundin*, 10 October 1930, 4.

[111] "Stimmen aus dem Leserkreis ueber 'Das 3. Geschlecht,'" *Die Freundin*, 16 July 1930, 4.

Times"). Topics varied greatly in content. Often they concerned cross-dressing. For example, a French woman's legal battle to wear male sports clothing was covered as the story unfolded.[112] There were also various articles about women or men who were discovered masquerading as the opposite sex.[113]

Frequently there were stories about the unexplained suicides of women (single or couples), who it was implied were lesbian.[114] Although it was not expressly stated, these stories' placement in a magazine aimed at *Aufklärung*, intimated that their suicides were related to the oppressive circumstances of lesbian life in Germany. This argument was explicitly advanced to explain the suicide attempt in the film *Mädchen in Uniform*.[115] There were also several items about a nun murdered by a novice whose love was unrequited,[116] and another fictitious story about love in a convent.[117] Perhaps these stories were meant to serve

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[112] "Eine Frau in Maennerkleidung hat im Frauensportverein nichts zu suchen! Frau Maurice verliert ihren Prozess," *Die Freundin*, 16 April 1930, 4; "Darf eine Frau Maennerkleidung tragen? Das Pariser Gericht konne sich nicht entscheiden. Es forderte Bedenkzeit," *Die Freundin*, 19 March 1930, 1; "Die Frau in Maennerkleidung," *Die Freundin*, 19 February 1930, 4.

[113] For examples, see "Tagebuch der Zeit: Eine Aerztin in Maennerkleidung," *Die Freundin*, 2 Oktober 1929, 5; "Das Maedchen, das ein junger Mann ist," *Die Freundin*, 12 December 1927, 6.

[114] For example, see "Tagebuch der Zeit: Selbstmord zweier Freundinnen," *Die Freundin*, 9 September 1931, 5.

[115] Eduard Oskar Puettmann, "Maedchen in Uniform," 20 January 1932, 4.

[116] "Tagebuch der Zeit: Eifersichtsmord an einer Nonne," *Die Freundin*, 4 December 1929, 6; "Tagebuch der Zeit: Eine Liebestragoedie In [sic] einem Nonnenkloster," 8 January 1930, 5.

[117] Bica, "Das Geheimnis der Priorin," 2 November 1932, 4-5.

as cautionary tales about the dangers of having inappropriate love objects in the same way that married women were considered dangerous lovers.

The image of the lesbian woman was also of interest to readers. For instance, the incidence of smoking among women around the world was discussed in the article "Rauchende Frauen" ("Smoking Women").[118] There were also articles on a possible tax on Bubikopf and on the British Lords' opinions of short hair.[119] *Meinungsaustausch Frage* ("Exchange-of-opinion Questions") asked for readers' views on the Bubikopf.[120] In one reply, Irene von Behlau came out strongly in support of the Bubikopf and urged all lesbian women to embrace the fashion.[121]

Indeed, readers' opinions were regularly solicited. The topics discussed included, for example, "Tagesfragen" ("Questions for our Day") such as "Zusammenleben oder nicht?" ("To Live Together or Not?") and a "Modefrage"("Fashion Question") that considered the clothing of transvestites. In response, Ellen van Derk, a transvestite, asserted that men who did not want to shave their beards should not wear women's clothing and moreover, van

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[118] "Was die Freundin plaudert: Rauchende Frauen," *Die Freundin*, 14 May 1928, 2.

[119] "Was die Freundin plaudert," *Die Freundin*, 22 August 1927, 5; "Die Lords ueber kurzes und langes Haar," *Die Freundin*, 11 July 1928, 2.

[120] Charlotte Paul, "Meinungsaustausch ueber Tagesfragen: Fuer oder gegen den Bubikopf," 19 March 1928, 6

[121] Irene von Behlau, "Meinungsaustausch ueber Tagesfragen: Fuer oder gegen den Bubikopf," *Die Freundin*, 5 March 1928, 5-6.

Derk complained, too many transvestites wore jewelry with artificial pearls.[122]

Reader's personal experiences and insights were also shared. In an article by Elisabeth v. T., "Husband and Girlfriend at the Same Time? Critical Observations of a Transvestite's Wife," the author described her experience in learning, after five years of marriage, that her husband was a transvestite. She shared how she came to accept this and accommodate it within her marriage.[123]

Nevertheless, despite these letters, there was some fear associated with being visible and identified with the lesbian community. Some women and men wrote under their real names, others used pseudonyms, gave only initials or a partial name. In an interview with the sociologist Ilse Kokula, "Branda" said that she had submitted a poem, "*Wer kann Tränen stillen*" ("Who Can Stop Tears?"), which was accepted for publication and to be printed on the first page of the magazine. She then had second thoughts, so she wrote and asked to have her poem withdrawn, which it was.[124] Nevertheless, the magazine also had well-known contributors like Selli Engler, Elsbeth Killmer and Annette Eick.[125]

A major portion of each issue of *Die Freundin* was devoted to short stories, novellas and poems. Naturally, many of the stories and poems that appeared in *Die Freundin* were

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[122] Ellen van Derk, "Meinungsaustausch ueber Modefragen: Zur Kleiderfrage des Transvestiten," *Die Freundin*, 22 August 1927, 5.

[123] "Mann und Freundin zugleich? Kritische Betrachtungen einer Transvestitengattin" (Elisabeth v. T., "Mann und Freundin zugleich?," *Die Freundin*, 5 March 1928, 4).

[124] Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 95.

[125] Eick's biography appears in Schoppmann, 102-115.

about the lives and loves of lesbians. These served an important purpose in that depending on the plots, they might provide an escapist fantasy into which a woman could place and identify herself, or they could provide models of what was implicitly characterized as true lesbian behaviour, such as, for example, a strong aversion to men. The women who read these stories (and poems) were shown what lesbians supposedly acted and felt like, and who could be considered a lesbian. For example, a plot about two women, Rie and Viola, detailed their joyful afternoon in the forest.[126] In another case, the unexpected meeting and happy reunion of Eva and Lotte in "A Story About the Love of Two Girlfriends," described female friendship but also articulated how lesbians identified themselves. In the story, Lotte explained "how she yearned for a great love, but how she could not like any man."[127] Another short fictional story described how a twelve year friendship ended because of the women's bad moods and lack of time for each other, which indirectly served as advice on how to maintain a relationship.[128]

The tales in *Die Freundin* could also be cautionary, such as when they warned of the dangers that married women posed to lesbians, or the precariousness of relationships. One supposedly true story was of a married woman's deception and betrayal of a young

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[126] Annette Eick, "Viola and Rie," *Die Freundin*, 11 Februry 1931, 2-4.

[127] "Die Geschichte von der Liebe zweier Freundinnen," "wie sie sich nach großer Liebe sehnte, wie sie aber keinen Mann gern haben konnte" Eva Guetthoff, "Die Geschichte von der Liebe zweier Freundinnen," (*Die Freundin*, 8 April 1931, 1-2).

[128] Mari Kamp, "Freundinnen," *Die Freundin*, 22 February 1933, 5.

homosexual transvestite woman.[129] Another story described the break-up of a group of friends, two couples, due to greed.[130]

Transvestites also enjoyed regular representation in *Die Freundin*. A special insert, *Der Welt der Transvestit* (The World of the Transvestite), was for a time a routine feature of the magazine, and there were always readers' letters or small news articles about transvestites. Moreover, transvestites were regular contributors to the personal ads. Even after the BfM devoted a magazine especially to transvestites, their interests and concerns continued to be reflected in the magazine, suggesting that they did not completely dissociate themselves from lesbian identity.

The small advertisement section of *Die Freundin* also provided a way for women (and men) to make contact with one another, expanding the community. Often people placed ads looking for a suitable partner – women seeking other women or men, transvestites seeking same or opposite sex relationships, male or female couples looking for other couples or singles, and men who did not identify themselves as transvestites, but who were looking for women.[131] Heterosexual transvestites claimed that they had difficulty finding a female

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[129] Maria L., "Der Leidensweg einer homosexuellen Frau," *Die Freundin*, 4 March 1931, 1.

[130] Hansi, 2-3.

[131] For examples see the following issues of *Die Freundin*: 2 November 1932, 6; 2 December 1931, 6; 25 February 1931, 5; 21 December 1932, 6; 2 November 1932, 6; 21 December 1932, 6; 20 January 1932, 7; 20 May 1931, 6; 18 February 1931, 5; 10 July 1929, 6; 13 November 1929, 5; and 10 July 1929, 6.

partner for marriage,[132] so the magazine assisted them in their efforts. Sometimes married women or couples sought other married women or couples,[133] or a married woman simply wanted to have a girlfriend.[134] Frequently women billed themselves as either "Bubi" ("lads") or "Mädel" ("girls").[135] The variety was exhaustive. Clearly, the readers of *Die Freundin* were not a homogenous group.

Sometimes the ads appeared to be slightly covert. Women advertised that they were looking for other women with whom they could auto-tour, play chess or exchange thoughts. Other advertisements sought models or announced masseuse services.[136] But the solicitations could also be quite direct: "Blonde, 30, good-looking, seeks employed girlfriend."[137]

The small notices were also used for announcing services. In addition to the regular notices about furnished rooms for rent, there were also a variety of other advertisers. One could obtain the photographic services of Gertrud Liebherr and her "Moderne Fotokunst" ("modern photographic art").[138] Readers were made aware of the "beauty care specialist"

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[132] This was an ongoing discussion in the magazine. See for example, "Die Welt der Transvestiten," *Die Freundin*, 20 January 1932, 7.

[133] *Die Freundin*, 10 July 1929, 6; *Die Freundin*, 29 Octobober 1930, 5; 3 September 1930, 5.

[134] *Die Freundin*, 29 October 1930, 5; 2 November, 1932, 6.

[135] *Die Freundin*, 10 July 1929, 6; *Die Freundin*, 2 July 1929, 6; 9 October 1929, 5; 29 October 1930, 5.

[136] *Die Freundin*, 1 October 1924, 2.

[137] "Blondine 30, gut aussehend, sucht berufstätige Freundin." (*Die Freundin*, 29 October 1930, 5).

[138] *Die Freundin*, 5 March 1928, 6.

Frau Dr. Hella Knabe who catered to transvestites, offering them a variety of shoes, clothing, beauty aids, wigs and so on.[139] Transvestites also solicited for good used women's clothing, and "Bubikopfpflege" ("Pageboy hair care") was another relatively specialized service offered to readers.[140] These small advertisements facilitated the connections made between like-minded women and men, but they also provided the physical tools a transvestite or lesbian needed in order to develop his or her identity.

A similar exchange occurred elsewhere in *Die Freundin* when readers wrote in with concerns and questions. For instance, a male transvestite enquired about how other male readers managed to purchase women's shoes, clothing and undergarments.[141] Another transvestite wanted to know women's views on male transvestitism. The editors referred her to Elisabeth v. T.'s article in the same issue, which suggested that women could find relationships with them quite satisfactory.[142] *Die Freundin* provided a unique forum for people who might otherwise have felt isolated with their problems and addressed the issues that corresponded to particular sexual identities.[143]

Physical and psychological isolation were major problems for transvestites and lesbian women. An indication of the extent of the problem was that personal advertisements

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[139] *Die Freundin*, 20 July 1930, 5; *Die Freundin*, 29 April 1931, 6.

[140] *Die Freundin*, 9 October 1929, 5; *Die Freundin*, 31 July 1929, 6.

[141] "Der Welt der Transvestiten: Der Transvestit im taeglichen Leben,"*Die Freundin*, 29 October 1930, 4.

[142] Karen Z. "Briefe, die man der 'Freundin' schreibt," *Die Freundin*, 5 March 1928, 5.

[143] "Ist die Frau der Freundschaft faehig?" *Die Freundin*, 10 October 1924, 5.

came from all over Germany: Essen, Prov. Hanover, Altmark, Leipzig, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Stettin, Wiesbaden, Chemnitz, Kassel and Breslau, to name only some. They also came from outside of Germany, for example, from Amsterdam.[144] Yet readers in large urban centres like Berlin, Hamburg and Munich also experienced loneliness and isolation. For example, one woman advertised, "Nuremberg. Lonely woman seeks same, educated but modern thinking girlfriend."[145] Furthermore, because "the provinces" were generally regarded as less tolerant of homosexuality than the large cities were, readers needed to be able to contact one another in their regions with minimal personal risk. In effect, *Die Freundin* created – on paper – a gathering place for men and women.

On the other hand, *Die Freundin* could be used as a way to signal one's identity to others 'in the know.' Several articles in the magazine depicted scenarios in which women reading or purchasing the magazine met like-minded women who had noted their choice of reading material. For example, one story told how a transvestite reading *Die Freundin* in a café attracted the notice of another woman.[146] Another story about *Komradschaft* began when two strangers met accidently at the newspaper vendor where they had each just purchased *Die Freundin*.[147]

In addition, the editors of *Die Freundin* and the BfM as a whole actively encouraged

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[144] *Die Freundin*, 3 September 1930, 5.

[145] "Nürnberg. Einsame sucht ebensolche, gebildete, jedoch modern denkende Freundin." (*Die Freundin*, 4 May 1932. 7).

[146] Dolly Graefin Tosca, "Begegnungen," *Die Freundin*, 17 July 1929, 4-5.

[147] Hansi, 2.

the development of Ortsgruppen, the local social-political clubs like Berlin's Damenklub Violetta. The magazine often carried the advertisements of people looking for members interested in starting a club or announcing their activities. A reader in Vienna talked about women's suicides there and appealed to the magazine for help in having Viennese women contact her.[148] A correspondence circle started for women inside and outside of Germany led to the foundation of a ladies group in Hamburg.[149] There were clubs as far-flung as Stettin, Düsseldorf, Breslau and Zürich, to name a few, and the magazine was read in Austria as well.[150]

The sense of community was real. A letter sent to *Die Freundin* about a reader's contribution on the issue of cross-dressing and marriage was addressed "Dear sister Willina!" and closed with "It would be a great pleasure for me to hear more from you and also from your wife herself. Warmest greetings. Your Georgette."[151]

Occasionally *Die Freundin* and the BfM interceded directly on behalf of readers. In the case of a young man who was ostracized from his community due to his sexual orientation, the BfM immediately protested against the actions of the police and the mayor,

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[148] E. Zelenka, "Ein offener Brief an 'Die Freundin'," 14 September 1932, 1-2.

[149] Lotte Hahm, "Klubnachrichten ueber Violetta. Korrespondenz-Zirkel," *Die Freundin*, 7 August 1927, 5.

[150] *Die Freundin*, 29 October 1930; *Die Freundin*, 29 April 1931, 6; *Die Freundin*, 2 July 1930, 5; *Die Freundin*, 8 March, 1933, 6.

[151] "Liebe Schwester Willina!" "Es wäre mir eine große Freude mehr von Ihnen und auch von Ihrer Frau selbst, zu hören. Innige Grüße. Ihre Georgette." (Georgette, "Erwiderung auf den Artikel in Nr. 11 der 'Freundin,'" *Die Freundin*, 6 November 1929, 4).

lodged a formal complaint and planned to launch an investigation.[152] This kind of advocacy must also have increased the sense that the BfM and *Die Freundin* were real and active forces in the lives of lesbians. Attesting to this, a reader who felt that transvestites needed to have summer vacations where they could dress as they chose asked, "Perhaps it is not impossible for the League for Human Rights [of which *Die Freundin* was an organ] to intervene in the matter."[153]

A sense of solidarity was also evident among the readership of *Die Freundin.* One reader stated her preference for supporting the businesses of homosexuals and shopping "only with our people."[154] Another reader talked about the importance of being among people with a common experience: "Perhaps it is possible to forget the bitterness of life for a few hours in a circle of people who want to understand each other."[155] Of course, the uniform content of *Die Freundin* and the social outlets that the magazine fostered developed that common experience.

The BfM's campaign of *Aufklärung* provided a common goal and its network of interdependent affiliated clubs, nightclubs and magazines created a 'standardized' community that nevertheless offered women a variety of opportunities for identification.

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[152] Weber, "Ein Deutscher ausgewiesen," 1.

[153] "Vielleicht ist es dem Bund für Menschenrecht, E. V., nicht unmöglich, in der Sache zu intervenieren" (Grete, "Transvestit und Hausarbeit," *Die Freundin*, 10 July 1929, 5).

[154] "nur bei unsern Leuten" (E. P., "Die Freundin hat das Wort," *Die Freundin*, 2 December, 1931, 4).

[155] "Vielleicht ist es möglich, das Bittere dieses Lebens einige Stunden zu vergessen in einem Kreis von Menschen, die einander verstehen wollen." (Zelenka, 2.)

Through *Die Freundin* they discovered other women who "yearned for a great love," but who "couldn't like any man" as the fictional character Lotte had explained.[156] They also found capable and career-minded women who reflected their own aspirations and they found women who embodied the 'feminine' ideals to the extent that they were comfortable only in the company of other women. If women felt comfortable in men's clothing, or if they embraced the modern styles, they also found like-minded women in the magazine – and the magazine gave them a name. One lesbian, Charlotte Falk explained, "Through my indifference, through the style of my clothes, which are sporty but completely normal, my shoes, I . . . became a *Mannweib*. . . . I had absolutely no idea that so many women love as I do . . . ."[157] Another reader wrote, "One must be a transvestite oneself [in order] to be able to appreciate the amount of desire with which we read everything that is written about us . . . ."[158] Through *Die Freundin* lesbians found an identity and accessed an entire community to support it: "As so often [happens] in the world, it was through chance that I came into the possession of *Die Freundin* and *Das 3. Geschlecht*. It was through them that I received valuable enlightenment about my own nature and also learned that I am not, by any means,

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[156] "nach großer Liebe sehnte, . . . aber keinen Mann gern haben konnte" Guetthoff, 1-2.

[157] "Ich . . . bin so durch meine Gleichgültigkeit, durch die Art meiner Kleidung, die sportlich, aber vollkommen normal ist, meine Schuhe, zu einem 'Mannweib' geworden. . . . Ich hatte doch keine Ahnung, daß so viele Frauen so lieben als ich . . . ." (Falk, 5).

[158] "Man muß schon selbst Transvestit sein, um ermessen zu können, mit welcher Begier wir alles lesen, was über uns geschrieben wird . . . ." ("Stimmen aus dem Leserkreis ueber 'Das 3. Geschlecht,'" *Die Freundin*, 16 July 1930, 4).

unique in the world."[159]

What then was that identity?

[159] "Wie so oft in der Welt, bin ich durch einen Zufall in den Besitz der 'Freundin' und in des '3. Geschlechts' gekommen. Dadurch habe ich wertvolle Aufklärungen über mein eigenes Wesen bekommen, und habe auch erfahren, daß ich in meiner Art bei weitem nicht alleinstehend in der Welt bin." ("Halb-transvestiten," *Die Freundin*, 16 September 1931, 5).

## Chapter 5

## Identity, Meaning and Reverse Discourse

"Because the norm is not something given by nature, but rather is determined by us, created from our own minds."[1]

Despite the sense of unity and collective experience expressed by readers of *Die Freundin*, lesbians were not part of a discrete category of women whose identity was the expression of an innate and uniform disposition. Lesbian women were a part of a larger category of people defined by medical and popular discourses in relation to their sexuality. The argument that their orientation was congenital left homosexuals open to the charge that they were diseased or degenerate. They recognized this when they resisted assertions by various individuals – physicians, psychologists and 'alternative' healers – that homosexuality could be cured. Furthermore, in the view of Friedrich Radszuweit, Magnus Hirschfeld's medicalization of homosexuality, which presented only the "hermaphroditic homosexuals" rather than the "normal homosexuals," was responsible for the characterization of homosexuals as "sick."[2] Although lesbians' self-identification retained the elements of the dominant classification scheme, the system that called them into being then permitted them to reappropriate and rearticulate their identities into new and more positive ways that countered a dominant discourse that labeled them as 'sick' and

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[1] "*Denn die Norm ist nicht etwas von Natur gegebenes, sondern von uns Berechnetes, von unserem Geiste Geschaffenes.*" (F. Mara, "Transvestitin!" *Die Freundin*, 8 January 1930, 1).

[2] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Homosexualitaet – ein medizinisches Fragment?" *Die Freundin*, 1 Juli 1931, 1; Because of Hirschfeld's participation in the Eulenburg affair, Radszuweit also blamed him for the use of homosexuality as political weapon

'unnatural.'

A nearly universal belief expressed by lesbians was that their orientation was innate. Even retrospectively, they insisted that their sexual inclinations were inborn. One woman, Anneliese W. (or "Johnny") recalled that lesbianism 'ran' in her family. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Margerete Knittel also believed that she had been born with her predisposition towards women, as did Annette Eick.[3] Still others, like Gerda Madsen, said simply that they had always been interested in women.[4]

Strikingly, however, lesbians' recollections of how they first came to recognize their sexual orientation frequently reveal that this involved the words and actions of others. Sometimes there was an initiating sexual encounter with another woman, as was the case with Elisabeth Leithäuser.[5] Some women stated that they had been introduced to the subculture by other women.[6] Other times there were affirmative remarks made by other people. For instance, when Hilde Radusch kissed a friend goodbye at the train station, her friend exclaimed "Oh, you're one of those!" This marked her first realization that she was "different from the others."[7] Gerda Madsen had a similar encounter with a heterosexual

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[3] Schoppmann, *Days*, 42, 92, 103.

[4] Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 78.

[5] Leithaeuser's partner said " What happened last night, that was definitely lesbian; everyone knows that often happens during puberty." (Schoppmann, *Days*, 124).

[6] For examples, see Schoppmann, *Days*, 42, 93.

[7] Schoppmann, *Days*, 31; This phrase, "different from the others" was also used by Margarete Knittel. It refers to the title of Magnus Hirschfeld's *Aufklaerungs* film and suggests the importance of subculture in self-identification.

girlfriend who inquired about her sexuality.[8] For Anneliese W., the suggestion was indirect. Allegedly her aunt, presumably also a lesbian, was said to have declared that the infant would become just like her. Anneliese also claimed that she had always preferred to wear trousers and a boy's haircut.[9] The 'masculinity' that others observed – or even the women's own awareness that they did not want to or could not conform to the 'feminine' role prescribed for them – marked them as lesbian.[10]

The historian Claudia Schoppmann has suggested that for many lesbians, particularly those without access to lesbian subculture, the process of self-identification was protracted as a result of their gender-specific socialization to be sexually passive and chaste prior to marriage, if not longer.[11] However, rather than suggest, as Schoppmann does, that this implies an innate and essential, lesbian identity waiting to emerge, this reveals the influence of society and subculture upon the creation of lesbian identity. Such influences are evident when one examines the ways in which lesbians represented their identity.

The notion of ideal female friendship from which the magazine *Die Freundin* took its name was described as a close relationship, very much like a marriage, in which women shared a home and had such a deep connection to each other that they were separable only by death. The relationships were so 'decent' and discrete that the erotic intimacy of the

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[8] Kokula, *Jahre des Gluecks*, 78.

[9] Schoppmann, *Days*, 42.

[10] Ibid., 103.

[11] Ibid., 116-17.

women was known only to the couple.[12] Stories like "'Er' und 'Sie'" described how girlfriends had shared every joy and every pain together. However, the sexual element of the relationship was not always a part of the definition. In the same story, which was written in one of the first issues of *Die Freundin* in 1924, the protagonist is forced to make a choice between her betrothed, and her girlfriend. On the basis of their friendship and not her sexuality, she chooses her girlfriend.[13]

Clearly ideal friendship was intended as a more fulfilling alternative to heterosexual marriage. A short essay on "Sappho as Wife and Mother" concluded with the sentence, "Having become wiser, Sappho would no longer allow herself to be harnessed into the yoke of a second marriage."[14] Another story about someone named Hannelore suggested that only a woman could kiss and love another in such a way that corresponded so perfectly to female desires.[15] And a novella about Marie Antionette, serialized in *Die Freundin*, described the queen's unhappiness in her marriage to an indifferent husband. The author detailed Marie's longing for a friend: "If only she could find a true girlfriend, whose selfless, brilliant love could transform her days of dreary splendour and inner emptiness."[16]

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[12] xyz., "Freundinnen-Ehe," *Die Freundin*, 11 January 1933, cover.

[13] I. B. "'Er' und 'Sie,'" *Die Freundin*, 15 October 1924, 3-4.

[14] "Die klug gewordene Sappho hat sich in ein zweites Ehejoch nicht mehr einspannen lassen." ("Sappho als Gattin und Mutter," 31 July 1929, 2).

[15] Ilse Schwarze, "Wie Hannelore sich in einen Mann veliebte," 19 March 1930, 1-2.

[16] "Wenn sie einmal eine wahre Freundin fände, die in selbstloser, weißleuchtender Liebe die Tage oft öden Prunkes und innerlicher Hohlheit ihr verklärte." Marie Louis v. Bern, "Die sommerliche Schlittenfahrt der Marie-Antoinette," (*Die*

The concept of ideal friendship or comradeship, seemed in many ways to transcend the negative portrayals of homosexuals. In the first place, the term did not refer to or imply sexuality in the way that labels like 'homosexual,' or '*gleichgeschlechtlich liebend*,' did. The lack of emphasis on sex acts was one of the reasons that Magnus Hirschfeld claimed to prefer the term "The Third Sex."[17] Furthermore, "comradeship" also evoked the 'friendships' that were associated with Sappho, an often-cited figure in lesbian magazines. In German society, where classical antiquity was highly valued, lesbians' could use an ancient Greek heritage to legitimize and destigmatize their relationships.

Put into these terms, as a noble and deeply satisfying relationship in which sexuality was concealed, friendship had the potential to be a more socially acceptable alternative to heterosexual marriage. It also had the potential to transcend the dominant discourse which characterized women's sexual relationships according to heterosexual norms. Although lesbians were still often configured as masculine/feminine types, friendship was not contingent upon this and offered women a relationship of equals as an alternative to heterosexual marriage.

In a classificatory scheme that invoked the traditional gender paradigm, lesbians often differentiated themselves as either 'virile' or 'feminine.' As with their heterosexual counterparts, these traits were thought to be manifested both physically and

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*Freundin*, 7 September 1932, 5).

[17] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht* (Berlin: Verlag Rosa Winkel, 1991 ) [1904], 14.

psychologically.[18] For example, the (lesbian) artist Gertrude Sandmann suggested that male and female traits were active and passive respectively.[19] Roellig maintained that the virile woman was chivalrous, and that the feminine lesbian was always in need of love and affection.[20] Furthermore, the belief in the existence of these male and female lesbian 'types' was articulated by a reader of *Die Freundin* who commented rhetorically, "for who does not know the masculine women better than the feminine."[21]

Such characterizations evoking male-female complementarity were frequently seen and reinforced in the clubs. It was a special feature of the Klub Monbijou that there was a "quite official differentiation made between '*Bubis*' – the masculine women – and '*Madis*' – the feminine women, like in the beloved Bell-Dance, in which only the '*Bubis*' hold bells and they use them to ring for their '*Mädis*'. Or when a dance is announced 'for the sweet *Muttis* ['mums'] who stand in contrast to the '*Vatis*' ['daddies'] who are mostly dressed in tuxedos."[22] The well-known club leaders Mali and Igel were described respectively as a

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[18] I am not saying that lesbians simply mimicked heterosexuals, since their sexuality still disrupted the dominant gender paradigm. However, their self-representation referenced the traditional framework.

[19] Schoppmann, *Days*, 80.

[20] Roellig, 36.

[21] "denn wer kennt nicht die maskuline Frau besser, denn die feminin." ("Die Freundin hat das Wort," *Die Freundin*, 6 January 1932, 5).

[22] "ganz offizielle Unterscheidung von 'Bubis' – den maskulinen – und 'Mädis' – den femininen Frauen. So beim beliebten Glockentanz, wo die 'Bubis' allein Glocken erhalten und sich damit ihre 'Mädis' heranläuten. Oder es wird ein Tanz angesagt 'für die süßen Muttis' – im Gegensatz zu den meist in ein Smoking-Kostüm gekleideten 'Vatis.'" (Roellig, 134-36).

Garçonne and a gamine, and in an advertisement for the Monokel-Diele a drawing of two women dancing together showed one of them wearing a monocle, black suit jacket and skirt; the other a long, flowing dress and jewelry.[23]

These characterizations were elaborated in fiction, although the masculine 'type' tended to be more common, probably owing to the notion that lesbianism was an inverted sexuality, and hence implicitly masculinized to some extent. A serialized novel, *Die Freundin der Olga Diers*, described the masculinized lesbian, Olga, as cigar smoking and having dreams in which she rides horses in the dark of night. Furthermore,

> "She felt herself to be a man and believed that she felt better in such surroundings. Even her rooms appeared to be furnished according to a rather masculine taste. She had a drawing room with an escritoire. She possessed a smoking room and a gaming room. Her bedroom gave the impression of being austere and cold. One found no vanity table or attractive Biedermeier armchair of the kind that women usually love. The walls were decorated with female figures, portraits, nude studies – the only objects to lend the rooms a certain warmth."[24]

Similarly, another lesbian character in the story, Dr. Sigrid Wenn, was described, in addition

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[23] Ibid., 116; *Die Freundin*, 23 March 1932, 7.

[24] "Sie fühlte sich als Mann und glaubte sich wohler in solcher Umgebung. Auch ihre Zimmer schienen in ihrer Einrichtung eher dem Geschmack eines Mannes zu entsprechen. Sie hatte ein Herrenzimmer mit einem Diplomaten, sie Besaß ein Rauchzimmer, einen Spielsalon. Ihre Schlafzimmer wirkte nüchtern und kalt. Keine Toilettentische, keine reizvollen Biedermeiersessel fand man, wie es sonst von den Frauen geliebt wurde. Die Wände schmückten Frauenfiguren, Köpfe, Aktstudien: die einzigen Gegenstände, den Räumen eine gewisse Wärme zu verleihen." (N. Lerman, "Die Freundin der Olga Diers," *Die Frendin*, 8 August 1924, 4).

to her 'masculine' profession, as having an unattractive face, a Pageboy haircut, "hands like a man" and a "tastelessness in her clothing."[25]

According to Roellig, lesbian "marriages" also reflected the male-female role division. She said they were the same as those of heterosexuals in that they consisted of a complementary union.[26] One striking example of this was the report of two nurses in Tisbury, England, who became very close friends. During the course of their friendship one of the pair, Eva, experienced a flattening of her breasts, a deepening of her voice and an intensification of her feelings for her friend Elly. She went to a doctor and after a thorough examination he declared, "You are no woman at all!" Thereafter, the couple was married.[27]

The masculinized lesbian was supposedly employed in such 'male' professions as photographer, director, editor, and actor. Conversely, the 'feminine' lesbian was said to have no real profession. Instead, she worked only to earn a living and was usually found working in such occupations as seamstress, masseuse or shop girl.[28] The feminine lesbian was also said by Aenne Weber, a writer for *Die Freundin*, to be highly skilled at housework.[29]

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[25] "*Hände wie ein Mann,*" "*Schmacklosigkeit in ihrer Kleidung*" (N. Lerman, "Die Freundin der Olga Diers," *Die Freundin*, 1 October 1924, 2).

[26] Roellig, 32-38; Roellig was asserting that lesbian relationships are as "normal" and natural is heterosexual marriages. In the introduction, she stated that her purpose was to bring "Enlightenment" and toleration for female homosexuality, so to this end she presented lesbian couples as conforming to the bourgeois norms of a masculine and a feminine element.

[27] "Freundinnen heiraten sich," *Die Freundin*, 16 July 1930, 4.

[28] Roellig, 38.

[29] Weber, "Die homosexuelle Frau," 6.

Furthermore, one lesbian declared that she needed to dress like a man in order to do a man's job. For her the issue was not just about the freedom of movement that male clothing afforded. Instead, wearing men's clothing was seen as necessary for fulfilling the role in the same way that a man would. "In a time of masculinized women, one permits fashion-dolls [to dress according to] every masculine style, but a working woman is denied the clothing that she needs in order to fulfill her job like a man."[30] Here, appearance was linked to the essence of masculinity. Clothes, literally, 'made the man.' Lotte Hahm embodied this as a highly successful and respected professional organizer and activist with the BfM, who also wore trousers, men's jackets and closely cropped hair (Figure 18).

Reflecting the view that lesbian women's sexual orientation was itself masculine, a reader of *Die Freundin*, Erna Hiller, said that they were most suited to sciences like medicine and chemistry or to business. Furthermore, she argued, the "*Berufsfrage*" was especially important to homosexual women because work was more than just a way to earn a living, but a spiritual need as well.[31] Even though Hiller identified no 'feminine' lesbians, her argument was still indebted to the traditional gender code.

Transvestites also operated within this paradigm. Many reported that when they assumed their female personae, that either they or their wives had suggested that in order for them to become 'fully woman' they should also assume female duties, like housework. Most

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[30] "In der Zeit der Vermännlichung der Frau, gestattet man Modepüppchen jede maskuline Laune, aber einer berufstätigen Frau wird die Kleidung verwehrt, die sie braucht, um ihre Position auszufüllen wie ein Mann." (Erna Dibelius, "Die Freundin und die Kleiderfrage!" 4 February 1931, 1).

[31] Erna Hiller, "Meinungsaustausch ueber Tagesfragen. Die homosexuelle Frau und ihr Beruf," *Die Freundin*, 12 December 1927, 6.

male transvestites seemed to accept and regard housework as a logical extension of their gender role. Indeed, an affinity for either a masculine or feminine profession seemed to validate what they believed was their 'true' gender. Declared one transvestite: "Already as children we had in us the urge to be helpful in the household."[32] Thus, if male transvestites' wives remained 'female' they shared the housework.[33] If the female partner 'became' male, she gave up her household duties entirely, as was the case when Hans Irmgard Markus traded roles with her husband. She became a city councillor and in the evenings enjoyed having tea brought to her, smoking and watching her husband busy himself with handwork.[34]

Occasionally, however, women challenged the gendered classifications. A woman named Maria wrote to *Die Freundin* to express her belief that even though nursing was a "thoroughly feminine" occupation, a virile lesbian could still find satisfaction in it.[35]

Still operating within the dominant discourse, lesbians also invoked the principles of Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter,* which was excerpted in *Die Freundin,*[36] to assert that lesbians simply exhibited the natural variation found between gender poles.

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[32] "Wir hatten als Kinder schon den Drang in uns, im Haushalt behilflich zu sein." (Grete, "Transvestit un Hausarbeit," *Die Freundin*, 10 July 1929, 5).

[33] Frau Holdi Gis, "Lebensbild eines Transvestiten," *Die Freundin*, 31 July 1929, 5; Anni H., "Transvestit und Haeuslichkeit," *Die Freundin*, 21 August 1929, 4.

[34] Hans Irmgard Markus, "Briefe, die man de 'Freundin' schreibt: Und wir Frauen in der Provinz?" *Die Freundin*, 28 May 1928, 4.

[35] "durchaus weiblicher" (Maria, "Meinungsaustausch ueber Tagesfragen: Die homosexuelle Frau und ihr Beruf," *Die Freundin*, 9 January 1928, 3).

[36] Otto Weininger, "Geschlecht und Charakter. Die emanzipierten Frau," *Die Freundin*, 14 January 1931, 1-2.

Examples of transitional forms ("*Übergangsformen*") found in nature were frequently cited as a way to show that homosexuals simply embodied different proportions and combinations of masculinity and femininity. Indeed, homosexuals even turned the tables by arguing that strictly defined 'types' were themselves unnatural. "Nowhere in nature does a fixed and demarcated type exist. Yet only in humans is this transition supposed to be missing? Just as there is no firmly delimited form in nature, a strict distinction between the sexes can be ruled out."[37]

The concept of 'natural variation' also corresponded with lesbians' belief that their identity was an essential, rather than an acquired vice. They argued that homosexuals had existed throughout history – that homosexuality was a constant. In *Die Freundin,* this historical continuity was stated explicitly, but it was also implied through biographical portrayals of Catherine the Great and the painter Rosa Bonheur.[38] The magazine also made the rather clever claim that biblical condemnations of homosexuality proved that since homosexuality had existed more than two thousand years ago, it was obviously a natural

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[37] "Nirgendwo gibt es in der Natur einen abgegrenzten, feststehenden Typ; nur bei den Menschen soll dieser Übergang fehlen? Wie es in der Natur keine festumgegrenzte Form gibt, so ist auch eine strenge Scheidung zwischen den Geschlechtern ausgeschlossen." (Elly R., "Die Transvestitenfrage," *Die Freundin*, 2 July 1929, 4); Johanna Elberskirchen," Was ist Homosexualitaet?," *Die Freundin*, 17 July 1929, 1.

[38] The inclusion of Catherine the Great (in the very first issue of the magazine) is curious in that her supposed homosexuality was presumably indicated by her 'masculinity': she enjoyed past times like hunting and riding and wore men's clothing. Her role and ability as the ruler of Russia were also masculine, but it was also asserted that in addition to her male lovers she also had relationships with "tribades." (Karsch-Haack, Prof. F., "Katharina II. Kaiserin von Russland -- die nordische Semiramis," *Die Freundin*, 8 August 1924, 2-3; Karsch-Haack, Prof. F., "Die Tiermalerin Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899)," *Die Freundin*, 12 September 1924, 1-3.

biological occurrence.[39]

'Great homosexuals of the past' were also frequently invoked to refute the assertion that homosexuals were degenerate. Sappho, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Michelangelo were just a few of those named in addition to the references to ancient Greek and Roman cultures.[40] Friedrich Radszuweit also cited ancient Greek culture in his response to the Nazi's plans to exile or execute homosexuals once in power.[41] Similarly, Roellig stated from the perspective of the dominant discourse (as Weininger had) that lesbian love was a result of female masculinization, and that this maleness, was evidence of lesbians' higher development – Catherine the Great and Queen Christina of Sweden being examples of lesbians' greater abilities.[42]

This identification with the higher status of men suggests that women who did not fit into traditional roles or who had aspirations other than those usually tolerated for women, might have felt themselves drawn to the lesbian community. The references to historical figures also gave lesbians a form of legitimacy since these individuals were powerful, admired and/or respected. Likewise the images of Lotte Hahm and Teddy, the manager of

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[39] Johanna Elberskirchen, "Was ist Homosexualitaet?," *Die Freundin*, 10 July 1929, 1.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Dr. Goebbels Lachmuskeln," *Die Freundin*, 5 August 1931, 1.

[42] Otto Weininger said: "Dass dem keinseswegs so is, dass eine homosexuelle Verhaeltnis, das wird aus dem zweiten Teile noch klar hervorgehen. Hier genuege die Bemerkung, dass die Niegung zu lesbischer Liebe in einer Frau eben ausfluss ihrer Maennlickkeit, diese aber Bedingung ihres Hoeherstehens ist." (*Geschlecht und Charakter*, 78-79); Roellig, 24.

the Geisha club, served as positive role models for homosexual women when they appeared on the covers of *Die Freundin*.[43]

The suggestion that lesbian women were descended from a long line of remarkable homosexuals also corresponded to the homosexual emancipation movement's rhetoric of *Aufklärung* or Enlightenment. This alluded to homosexuals' direct association with human progress and civilization. Roellig declared that humans would eventually develop into a Third Sex, instead of continuing as male or female, which was contrary to Bloch's assertion that androgyny was a sign of civilizational decline.[44]

It also suggested that homosexuals saw themselves as truly "modern." Lesbians themselves were represented this way in the homosexual press. Recall, for example, the androgynous, uniformed woman on the cover of *Die Freundin* who was declared to be "*Die moderne Frau!*"[45] The trend to wear short hair (and the scandal it generated) was a frequent topic in *Die Freundin*, suggesting the novelty of the lesbian/New Woman look. Similarly, fictional stories about women often described women who smoked, indicating through the association with the New Woman, a woman with a disposable income, independent in thought and lifestyle. This kind of woman, who could be either a lesbian or a New Woman was just that: she was new; she was modern. That lesbians were "Schauobjekte" for heterosexuals who went to clubs like the very popular and trendy Eldorado, indicates that

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[43] *Die Freundin*, 23 October 1929, cover; *Die Freundin*, 4 February 1931, cover. In both cases, the women are identified by name along with their professions.

[44] Roellig, 42.

[45] *Die Freundin*, 19 March 1930, cover.

the general public also regarded lesbians as being 'the latest.'

Accordingly, homosexuals often referred to themselves as products of the city. Already in 1904 in *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht*, Hirschfeld had linked homosexuals to urbanization.[46] Hirschfeld advanced an argument reminiscent of Georg Simmel's theory (1903) that the anonymity of the city diminished social control and that the metropolis was the "seat of cosmopolitanism."[47] This idea persisted into the Weimar period when Berlin, particularly, was seen as a place that was tolerant of difference and everyone could live there according to their preference.[48]

Moreover, using the city as a metaphor of modernity, club guides often implied that the night spot was a microcosm of urban life. "Every year, besides the festivities held by the clubs, there are two big dances – costume fests – mostly in one of the halls of the Skala – about which the daily press report now and again, since they portray a certain sensation of Berlin."[49]

Roellig's idealization of city life glamourized the clubs' appeal to readers' fantasies and their excitement about the city. "The city demonstrates – peacock-like – here in this part of town, its almost bewildering, colourful brightness, shining and brilliant. With loud

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[46] Hirschfeld, *Drittes Geschlecht*, 13.

[47] George Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *Metropolis: Centre and Symbol of our Times*, ed. Phillip Kasinitz (London: MacMillan Press, 1995), 40.

[48] Roellig, 52.

[49] "In jedem Jahr finden neben den internen Klubfesten zwei große Bälle, Kostümfeste, zumeist in einem der Säle der Skala statt, über die auch hin und wieder die Tagespresse berichtet, da sie eine gewisse Sensation von Berlin bilden." (Ibid., 120); There are also numerous examples in Moreck. For one, see page 20.

fanfare it proclaims from rooftops and street fronts – everything which only human senses could enjoy."[50] Roellig's frequent comments that one locale or another attracted Berlin's glitterati – filmstars, singers, and actresses – alluded to the social mixing that was thought to occur in the city.[51] Indeed, she asserted that women from all social circles were attracted to lesbian nightclubs. As a result, she implied, women from different social classes were romantically brought together as couples.[52] Furthermore, she maintained that the city provided refuge to women, identified as the "Priesterinnen der Sappho" ("Priestesses of Sappho"), who sought escape from the detested norms of bourgeois life. This, then, suggests something more than simply an innate aversion to men.[53] All of this appealed to women's fantasies and helped to support the club life that encouraged lesbian self-identification and the notion that lesbians were 'modern' women.

Lesbians also identified themselves under the larger rubric of "homosexual" or "*gleichgeschlechtlich liebenden*" men and women. However, the significant presence of male and female transvestites in the lesbian subculture suggests that lesbian identity was not

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[50] "Pfauenartig schildert hier in dieser gegend die Stadt in ihrem fast verwirrenden, bunten Glanz, strahlt und leuchtet und preist mit lautlosen Fanfaren von Dächern und Häuserfronten alles an, was nur den Sinn des Menschen erfreuen könnte." (Roellig, 82).

[51] Roellig suggested that the clubs Monbijou, Auluka-Diele, Toppkeller, Eldorado all had prominent or "international' guests (72, 76, 94, 116-18).

[52] Ibid., 20.

[53] Ibid., 26, 52.

exclusively defined by gender or same-sex love.[54] Although transvestites could be homosexual, they could also be heterosexual. Obviously the lesbian transvestite traversed two identities, but male transvestites and heterosexual transvestites were also included in the magazine.

On the one hand, these groups might all be said to have shared some aspect of femaleness: either biological or 'constitutional.' For example, the virile lesbian or the female transvestite were still biologically women and the male transvestite had a female inner disposition. This corresponded with the female-centredness of the title of *Die Freundin*. It was also true for one 'provincial' transvestite who wrote that where she lived she had no opportunity to meet a girlfriend and was forced to marry, so she gradually achieved her husband's conversion into a woman, while she assumed a male role, so that their relationship became "like one that usually occurs between girlfriends."[55] Yet these configurations indicate the ambiguity that remained within a system that tried to transcend the traditional gender paradigm – one that fixed sexuality and behaviour – but which was nevertheless beholden to it.

On the other hand, one could argue that the groups were united by their 'deviance' from the norms of heterosexual gender roles (behaviour, appearance and sexuality). Together homosexuals and transvestites shared the category of sexual "intermediates," or

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[54] This is in contradiction to Hirschfeld's exclusion of women from the category of transvestite in his *Die Transvestiten* in 1910. For more on this see Geertje Mak, "'Passing Women' im Sprechzimmer von Magnus Hirschfeld," *Oesterreichische Zeitschrift fuer Geschichstwissenschaften* 9, no. 3 (1998): 384-399.

[55] "wie er zwischen Freundinnen üblich ist." (Markus, 4).

rather, within the pages of *Die Freundin* they seemed to. The magazine asserted that the majority of *male* transvestites were either homosexual or heterosexuals married with children.[56] In fact, it was supposedly "statistically established" that 35% of transvestites had "normal feelings," that is, heterosexual; 35% were homosexual; and approximately 30% were either "bisexual, automonosexual" or "asexual".[57] Of the 35% that were homosexuals, many also belonged to another variety of intermediacy and the remaining 65% were not "pure" types within their categories, that is, not purely homosexual transvestite or heterosexual transvestite, etc., but rather they were combinations of different degrees of other forms of intermediacy.[58] Another article asserted that the majority of female transvestites were homosexual.[59]

Geertje Mak has shown that within the discourse of sexual science, the variation of male sexuality was established by Magnus Hirschfeld in *Die Transvestiten* (1910). That is, a man's internal drive to wear female clothes was completely separate from his sexuality and did not automatically make him a homosexual. However, women, she argues, were excluded from Hirschfeld's concept of transvestitism and as a consequence continued to be defined by their sex as 'inverted.'[60] Nevertheless, in their efforts to portray lesbians as 'natural' the

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[56] F. Mara, "Transvestiten!" *Die Freundin*, 8 January 1930, 1.

[57] "normal empfindend" (F. Mara, "Transvestiten!," *Die Freundin*, 22 January 1930, 1).

[58] "Transvestiten," *Die Freundin*, 22 January 1930, 1.

[59] Kaete Karl, "Der Transvestit," *Die Freundin*, 31 July 1929, 4.

[60] Mak, 385.

editors of *Die Freundin* applied the concept of sexual variation and intermediacy broadly throughout the publication, making no distinction between male and female homosexuals.

This explains why the line between transvestitism and lesbianism was so unclear. Indeed, one reader of *Die Freundin*, Fred Palues, complained that there were too few articles about the nature of transvestistism to facilitate Aufklärung.[61] The magazine seemed to be offering two competing discourses: the concept of the 'masculine woman' and the modified notion of 'sexual variation in nature.' While much of the fiction and photographs offered up images of the male/female dichotomy – 'virile' women, like "Charly and Boy, the two masculine women .... [Their] long evening dresses hindered them. Both were accustomed to stepping out with long strides" – it did so along side of articles that insisted that "There are only bisexual variations."[62]

The problem was compounded by the fact that the definition of a transvestite seems itself to have been in a state of flux, or at least open to negotiation. The term 'the third sex' was used by Magnus Hirschfeld until about 1910 to denote all homosexuals, but after the war, Radszuweit Publishing used it to refer specifically to transvestites in the book "Das 3. Geschlecht." This suggests that despite Hirschfeld's move away from a theory that maintained absolute gender distinctions, Radszuweit reapplied it to transvestites despite his

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[61] "Erwiderung an Fred Palues!" *Die Freundin*, 20 May 1931, 6.

[62] "Charly und Boy, die beiden männlichen Frauen .... Die langen Abendkleider behinderten sie, beide waren gewöhnt, mit großen Schritten auszuschreiten", "Es gibt nur bisexuelle Variatäten." (Hansi, 2; Johanna Elberskirchen, "Was ist Homosexualitaet?" *Die Freundin*, 24 July 1929, 1).

magazine's assertion that there was no absolute male or female, only sexual variation.[63] In another example, of how contested the terms applied to transvestitism were, one reader of *Die Freundin* suggested the new designation of the "half-transvestite" to refer to someone whose preference for female clothes was based only on aesthetics (as opposed to an expression of their 'true gender'): he thought men's fashions were ugly although another reader roundly condemned his terminology.[64]

Still, over the course of the Weimar era, efforts by the BfM to separate the lesbian and transvestite identities seem to have increased, although with mixed success. In 1930 the transvestite section of the Damenklub Violetta managed to produce a monthly newspaper called *Das dritte Geschlecht* despite the fact that the BfM's previous attempts to start a transvestite periodical had been suspended due to poor sales of advance subscriptions[65] (which also indicates the resistance to severing the two identities). Yet, as the many letters from *Die Freundin's* readers praising the new publication suggest, many transvestites still continued to purchase *Die Freundin*. Apparently the two identities were not so far apart that transvestites gave up their interest in the lesbian publication. Presumably, *Die Freundin's* continuation of "Der Welt der Transvestit" columns was because they were also of interest to lesbian readers. Furthermore, Radszuweit Verlag's use of the term 'the Third Sex' to refer to transvestites rather than all homosexuals, narrowed its meaning, making it more

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[63] Johanna Elberskirchen, "Was ist Homosexualitaet?" *Die Freundin*, 24 July 1929, 1.

[64] "Halb-Transvestiten," *Die Freundin*, 16 September 1931, 5; O., "Zum Artikel in Nr. 37 der 'Freundin' 'Halb-Transvestiten,'" *Die Freundin*, 7 October 1931, 5.

[65] Friedrich Radszuweit, " Bitte lesen!" *Die Freundin*, 23 April 1930, 3.

specific.[66]

Yet, even though the BfM seems to have tried to foster a separation of the two identities, there remained a fluidity that allowed transvestites and lesbians to move back and forth between the two.[67] In one fictional story, the lesbian protagonist fell in love with another woman whom she initially mistook for a man because of her masculine attire. Despite the cross-dressing, both women were portrayed as lesbian, and the masculinity of the lover was only a problem when it was believed that she was a heterosexual male.[68] In another example, Roellig described a young woman named Irma at the Pfeifenklub in the Café Prinzess. While the other women at the club paid no heed to the men there, Irma, in a brown pageboy and sailor suit only paid attention to them. Roellig explained that although Irma was attracted to men, she did not like to wear women's clothing ("the clothing of her own sex"). Yet despite her attention to the men of the club, readers were also told that Irma, dressed as a "charming boy," was a plaything for the women in the club who liked to caress her and hold her in their arms.[69]

In theory, what constituted a 'true' lesbian was still the emphasis on a congenital disposition. Biology delineated "genuine" lesbians from "pseudohomosexual" women.

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[66] An advertisement for the BfM publication places the clarification "Die Transvestiten" in brackets after the title *das 3. Geschlecht* (2 July 1930, 5).

[67] One is also reminded of the male transvestite who attended a Mondschein-Dampferpartei with apparently no objections from the lesbians who also took part.

[68] Ilse Schwarze, "Wie Hannelorle [sic] sich in einen Mann verliebte," *Die Freundin*, 19 March 1930, 1-2.

[69] "*den Kleidern ihers eigenen Geschlechts*", "*lieblichen Knaben*" (Roellig, 128-30).

Roellig contended (in keeping with the ideas advanced by Hirschfeld and Bloch), that 'true' lesbians had a deeply-rooted and irreversible aversion to men.[70] In support of this, she cited the example of a beautiful lesbian with many male suitors who was so strongly repelled by men that she felt a heterosexual relationship would be almost criminal. Roellig asserted that a lesbian's desire to be with other women was not the result of a 'man shortage' leading to "Ersatz" or "faute de mieux" love, referring to a popular belief about the cause of lesbianism. Roellig's position, then served to reject the notion that lesbians could be 'cured' if there were simply more men.[71]

In popular publications like *Die Freundin*, the distinction between 'true' homosexuals and pseudohomosexuals was usually less explicit, but the point was frequently still made through stories and novels that true lesbians were indifferent to, or had an aversion to, men.[72] One story that appeared in *Die Freundin*, "How Hannelore Fell in Love with a Man," vigorously pointed up this fundamental belief. This short fiction described the romantic tryst that occurred one afternoon between Hannelore and a 'man' whom she met by chance at a café. The author emphasized the confusion felt by Hannelore, whose indifference and aversion to men was normally so great that even taking a seat with one in a crowded café was something to be avoided and done only of necessity. Eventually, the new

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[70] Ibid., 24-26.

[71] Ibid., 24.

[72] Lesbians' biological predisposition was often discussed, but pseudohomosexuality was not directly referenced.

boyfriend removed 'his' disguise to reveal that 'he' was in fact a woman.[73] The moral of this story was clear: true lesbians are only ever attracted to women. Moreover, this attraction was such a strongly ingrained biological affinity that it transcended even the deceptive outward appearance of a woman in male clothing.

Pseudohomosexuals, on the other hand, might become involved with women, but ultimately they would leave their female partners for the company of men. For example, Gudrun in the story "Die Freundin der Olga Diers" ("The Girlfriend of Olga Diers"), is said to have had her mother's drive towards men (her mother was a prostitute) despite the fact that she was involved with Olga. Eventually she replaced this relationship with a heterosexual one.[74]

Despite the identification by *Die Freundin* of bisexuality as a variation within transvestitism, that orientation was largely treated as a form of pseudohomosexuality. One reader complained that one could not speak freely in the publication on the topic of bisexuality without encountering disapproval.[75] In reply, another reader pointedly declared that one could not serve two masters and that such women were not true homosexuals.[76]

For a lesbian, a relationship with a bisexual woman could be "catastrophic."[77] In the story of Hannelore, a reference to a girlfriend who was suffering after being deserted for a

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[73] Schwarze, "Hannelorle," 1-2.

[74] N. Lermann, "Die Freundin der Olga Diers," 8 August 1924, 5.

[75] I. B., "Unsere Leser haben das Wort," *Die Freundin*, 8 January 1930, 5.

[76] Emilie S., "Unser Leser hat das Wort," *Die Freundin*, 26 February 1930, 3.

[77] Ibid.

man hinted at the emotional destruction that pseudohomosexual women could do.[78] Bisexuals, then, occupied a liminal space within the lesbian community itself that provoked a fear comparable to that which lesbian hybrids provoked in heterosexuals.

The status of prostitutes was also an area of ambiguity. Roellig claimed that they entered homosexual relationships in order to find happiness and to salvage what remained of their humanity. Roellig did not outright separate lesbians from prostitution as the medical community did, but she described them as "A special category."[79]

Her ambivalence was perhaps born of a change in the way that prostitutes were regarded in the lesbian community. In 1924 *Die Freundin* showed a strong interest in the problem of *Mädchenhandel* (white slavery). Over time, however, the interest waned. Instead, editorials that defensively asserted the moral rectitude of homosexuals distanced lesbians from prostitution. One author maintained that a distinction should be made between homosexual women and prostitution in the same way that heterosexual women were differentiated from it.[80] The topic was important enough that Lotte Hahm even gave a lecture, entitled "Are Female Homosexuals Prostitutes?" Apparently its purpose was to dismiss the assertion made by Franz Scheda, the author of a book on lesbian love, that a majority of homosexual women were prostitutes.[81] In order to counter this association

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[78] Schwarze, 1.

[79] "Eine besondere Kategorie" (Roellig, 26).

[80] Friedrich Radszuweit, "Noch einmal Justizminister a. D. Dr. Mueller-Meiningen," 4 June 1930, 1.

[81] "Sind die weibliche Homosexuelle Prostituierte?" (Else Meissner, "Sind die weiblicher Homosexuelle Prostituierte?" 5 March 1930, 5).

between lesbians and "inferior human beings," the concept of true homosexuality was invoked. It was argued that "the really true homosexual woman" occupied only the most difficult, demanding and responsible jobs.[82] What had formerly been a feminist concern for prostitutes, was abandoned for a defense of lesbian morality, but it was through the medical discourse that lesbians countered the accusations of their depravity.

The status of women in Weimar society problematized a definition of 'true' homosexuality that was too simplistic to reflect their circumstances. Women who loved women may have entered into heterosexual relationships despite their personal distaste for men. One reader of *Die Freundin* certainly raised this issue, objecting that lesbian women might marry because of parental or financial pressure.[83] Another reader, Clara K. of Essen, agreed with her,[84] although others thought that if a lesbian married it was because she had not yet recognized her true inclinations.[85] These kinds of circumstances, however, could not be accommodated within a previously 'male' definition of homosexuality. This suggests why maternal images were dropped from the cover of *Die Freundin*. It is also worth recalling the children that were present at a Christmas celebration in one of the women's clubs. Instead, definitions of homosexuality forced imperatives like those in Emilie S.'s statements in *Die*

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[82] "minderwertigen Menschen," "die wirklich echte homosexuelle Frau" (Else Meissner, "Sind die weiblichen Homosexuelle Prostituierte?" 5 March 1930, 5).

[83] I. B., "Unsere Leser haben das Wort,"*Die Freundin*, 8 January 1930, 5.

[84] Clara K., "Soll eine homosexuelle Frau mit einer bisexuellen Freundschaft schliessen?" *Die Freundin*, 9 April 1930, 1.

[85] Helene Stock, "Die Aechtung der homosexuellen Frau," *Die Freundin*, 31 July 1929, 1.

*Freundin* that no matter what her circumstances, a homosexual woman would not prostitute herself to a man in marriage, because that was against her nature.[86] Clearly, even as lesbian identity was produced by a process of boundary setting and exclusions that defined heterosexual norms, the homosexual identity, which was its counterpart, also forced a process of homogenization.

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[86] Emilie S., " Unser Leser hat das Wort!" *Die Freundin*, 26 February 1930, 3.

## Chapter 6

## Conclusion

What did it mean to be a lesbian in Weimar Germany? Was she a feminist? A New Woman? Was she a man in a woman's body – maybe she even had a masculinized body? In the terms of her time, the lesbian woman could be all of these things, but none exclusively. Instead her sexual identity overlapped and shifted between these. Lesbian identity was not an essential and stable identity that precluded all others.

The Weimar Republic was a time of contest and redefinition. Even as the social, political and economic climate was in a state of flux, so was the role of women. The mass culture industries, complemented by a discourse of science and medicalization, came into full flower in Germany during that period. It often celebrated – or condemned – social change and notions of 'the modern' and offered women many new and competing images to identify with, destabilizing their identity, but at the same time providing the means by which to elaborate and fix identities, such as that of the lesbian. The war had blurred gender boundaries, but still many of the old, patriarchal structures remained in place. The 'biologically-based' gender paradigm which invoked the poles of 'male' and 'female' and notions of sexual complementarity remained part of the dominant discourse. As women increasingly challenged this framework, they fell outside of the norms, or rather between them into the intermediate space of the hybrid. Considered to be neither man nor woman, the popular and medical discourse which identified their deviance tried to contain their potential subversiveness by naming them: feminists, New Women, and lesbians. The

identities multiplied, but their central positioning and ambiguous status made the identities shifting and unstable – a site of contest. Often overlapping with one another, their very ambiguity, their intermediacy, threatened the system of opposites which defined men and women. The lesbian's characterization as 'degenerate' and 'perverse' was the response that her gender 'impurity' provoked.

Although homosexuality posed a challenge to the old ways of thinking, the lesbian herself had been constituted by the gender paradigm and the medical discourse, so she retained many of its elements, like the association between gender and sexuality, and the characterization of lesbians as masculinized. Without this framework, lesbian identity would not have become what it was in the Weimar Republic.

However, the lesbian was not solely the product of the dominant discourse. From the moment of her 'christening,' the opportunity for an appropriation and subversion of meanings was created. Her identity was never essential or stable, but rather was part of an ongoing process of redefinition that was facilitated by the subculture itself. Therefore, despite their adherence to the notion of male and female roles, lesbians were able to subvert their conventional meanings and argue instead that, for example, lesbian women should have access to meaningful employment; that they deserved a higher social status than that assigned to 'real' women; or that they could have normal and healthy relationships outside of heterosexual marriages. Once lesbians were designated as an identifiable group they could reply to the charges that they were 'unnatural' and 'degenerate' by pointing to a heritage, retrospectively created, that suggested that they were neither. Indeed, they could also point to the moral behaviour of their 'sisters' as superior to that of heterosexuals. They could also

claim that their intermediacy was itself the norm.

The lesbian subculture, exemplified here by *Die Freundin*, was elaborated by an extensive and mutually supporting infrastructure of books, films, magazines, nightclubs, social clubs and the homosexual emancipation movement itself. It presented women with many new images and opportunities for self-identification. It also helped to homogenize lesbian identity, which required its own process of codification, for instance, inclusion and exclusion. The boundaries of homosexual and pseudohomosexual, which conformed to the medical discourse and the male-identified conception of homosexuality, also advanced a reverse discourse that could reject so-called 'degenerates,' such as prostitutes, as 'not one of us.'

Nevertheless, lesbian identity was heterogenous and fluid, shifting between different 'types' of women and different sexual identities like transvestitism. In defining its boundaries it moved from a simple one based loosely upon notions of female friendship, female masculinization and male/female roles, to one with more fully developed borders.

This thesis represents only one small aspect of the research that remains to be done. Rather than being an 'answer' it is more of a question that points the direction to other possible inquiries. A closer analysis needs to be made of other sources, for instance, the many films and novels that exceeded the capacity and scope of this thesis. My own examination of *Garçonne* magazine, unreported here, suggests that lesbian subculture was even more heterogenous than what I have shown. Consideration should also be given to male homosexuality. What were the features and limits of this identity? One might also consider what the nature of female relationships in other eras was. Lesbians in the Weimar Republic

represent a unique moment of self-identification and resistance. If men and women today are to transcend the current gender codes, then we need to think about homosexuals of the past in new ways. I hope that this thesis has done that.

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# Die Freundin

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1. Oktober 1924

HALBMONATSSCHRIFT FÜR FREUNDSCHAFT, RECHT UND FREIHEIT

In einem Jahre

## 3700 Frauen verschollen!

In Graz findet in den nächsten Tagen ein internationaler Weltkongreß zur Bekämpfung der Prostitution und des Mädchenhandels statt. Der Vorsitzende des Arbeitskomitees, der bekannte Laienprediger und Abstinenzapostel Professor Dr. Johann Ude, gibt im „N. Wien. Journ." folgenden erschütternden Tatsachenbericht:

In der Zeit vom 1. Oktober 1919 bis 1. Mai 1920 sind in den deutschen Großstädten allein rund 3700 junge Mädchen und Frauen spurlos verschwunden. Die meisten sind Mädchenhändlern zum Opfer gefallen. Die unter Vorspiegelung günstiger Erwerbsmöglichkeiten und Versprechungen von Agenten der „distinguierten Damen" für das Ausland angeworbenen Mädchen landen für gewöhnlich in einem Bordell oder Vergnügungslokal irgendeiner Stadt am Balkan, zumeist in Bulgarien oder Griechenland oder in irgendeiner Großstadt Amerikas. Über Mädchenhändler und aktive Mädchenhändlerinnen werden eine Interpellation treffen die Reise über die Grenze unbehelligt an, und das Los vieler dieser ärmsten Opfer ist für immer besiegelt. In serbische und mazedonische Bordelle sind wiederholt noch schulpflichtige Mädchen verhandelt worden. In deutschen Städten zum Beispiel in Hamburg und seinen armen Vorgebirgen gibt es wohlorganisierte Zentralen für Mädchenhandel. Doch man muß noch immer denken, daß die Mädchen ins Ausland verschleppt werden, sondern sehr wurden im Inland selbst verkappelt, da [illegible] vom Staat [illegible] Bordelle immer wieder [illegible] Ware für [illegible] vielfach [illegible] distinguierten Kunden [illegible] liefern.

Die Beschlüsse des internationalen Kongresses zur Bekämpfung des Mädchen- und Kinderhandels [illegible]

Figure 1. "Erho lung"
(*Die Freundin*, 1 October 1924)

Figure 2. "Revue Girl"
(*Die Freundin*, 5 September 1927)

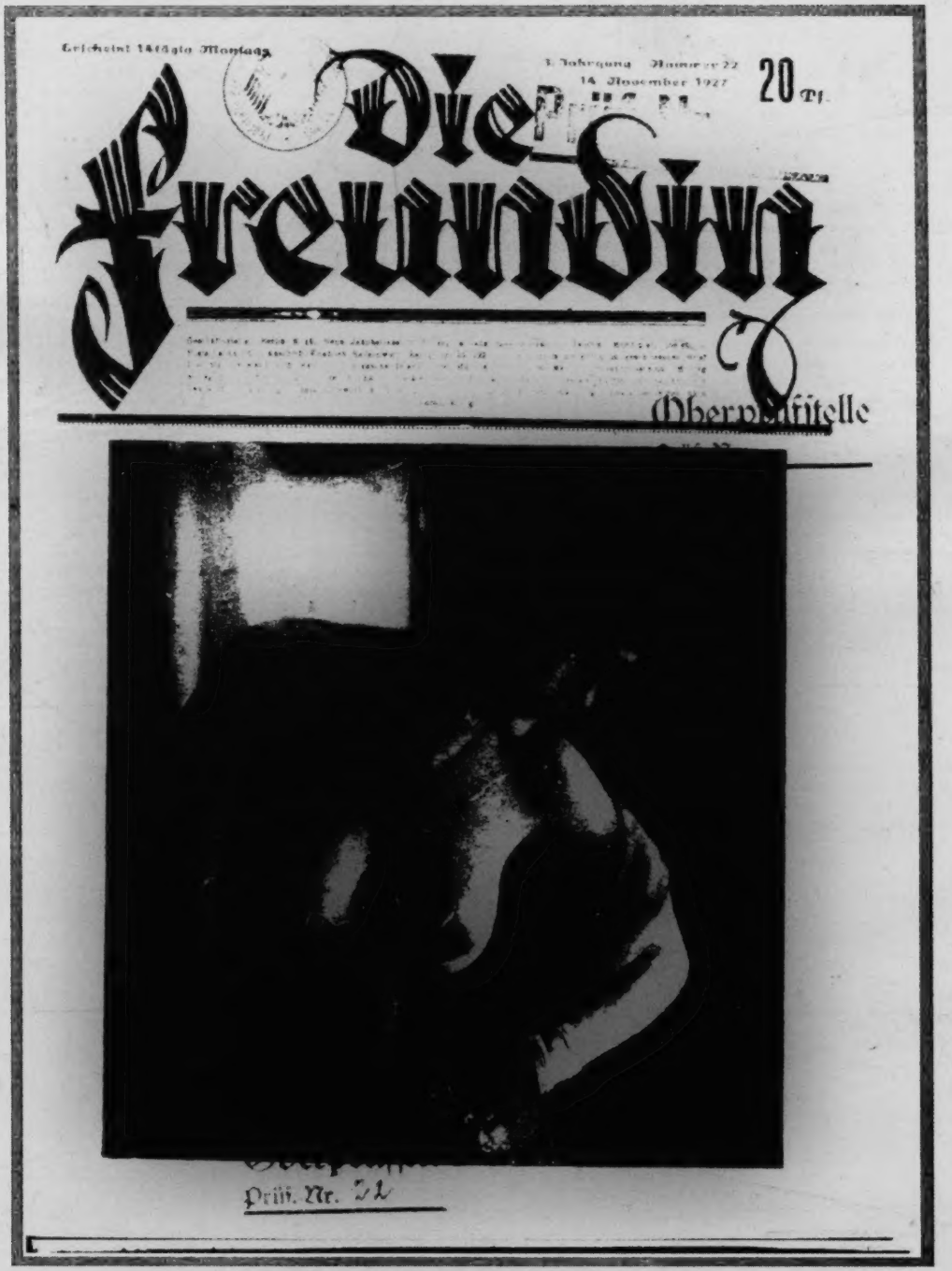



Figure 3.
(*Die Freundin*, 14 November 1927)

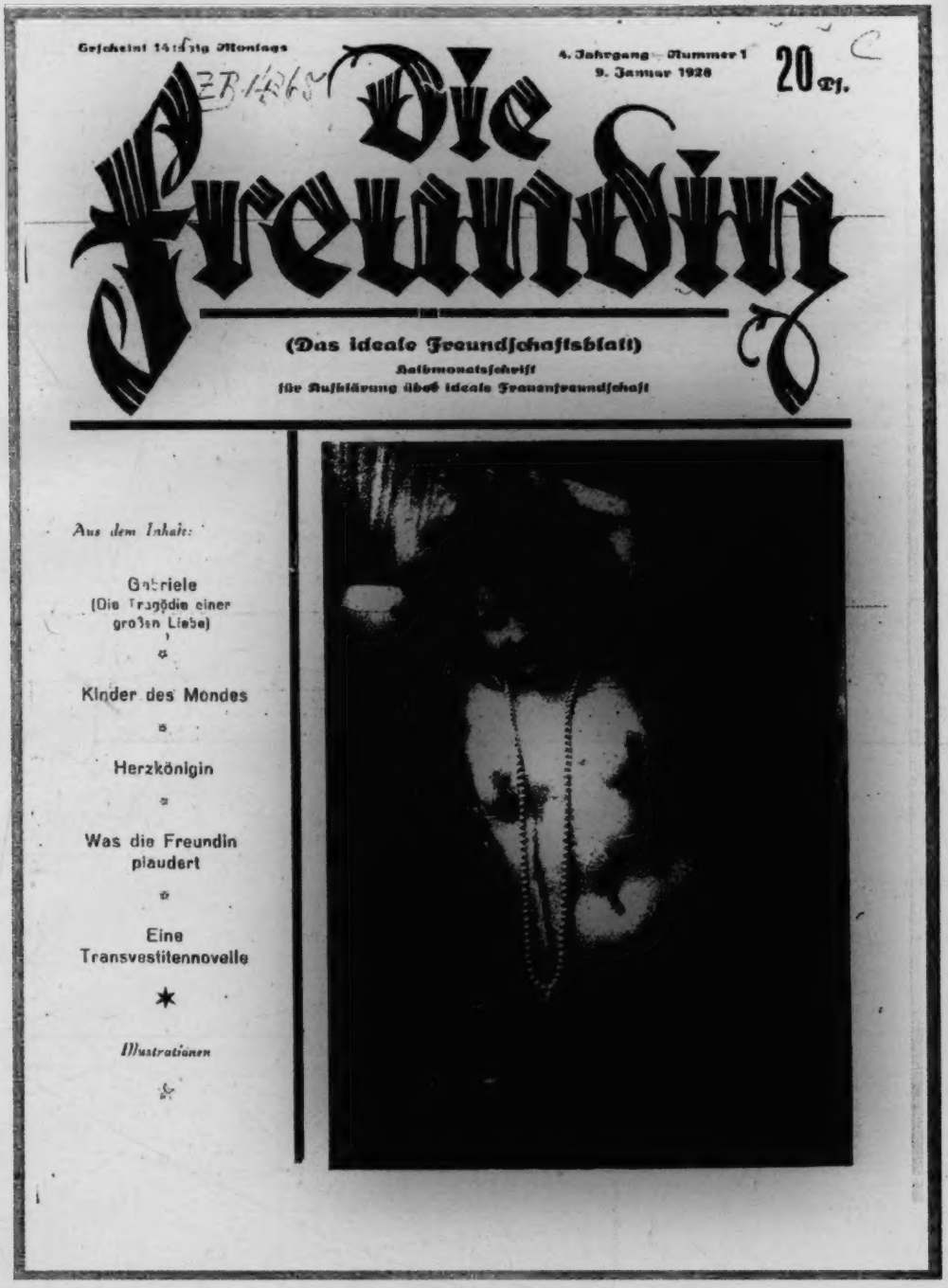
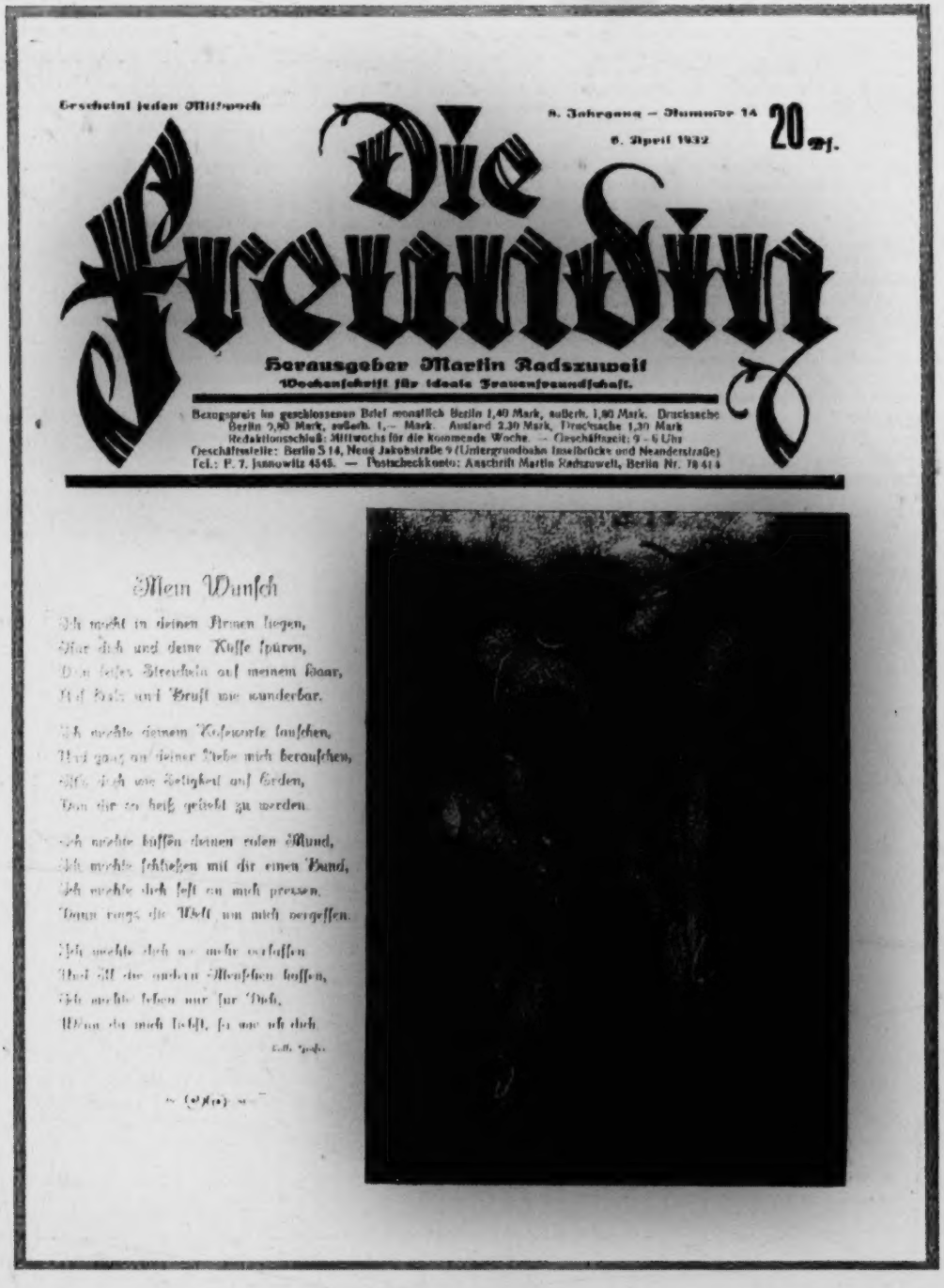



Figure 4.
(*Die Freundin*, 9 January 1928)

Figure 5.
(*Die Freundin*, 31 October 1927)



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## Mein Wunsch

Ich möcht in deinen Armen liegen,
Nur dich und deine Küsse spüren,
Dein loses Streicheln auf meinem Haar,
Auf Hals und Brust wie wunderbar.

Ich möchte deinem Koseworte lauschen,
Und ganz an deiner Liebe mich berauschen,
Alles dich wie Heiligkeit auf Erden,
Von dir so heiß geliebt zu werden.

Ich möchte küssen deinen roten Mund,
Ich möchte schließen mit dir einen Bund,
Ich möchte dich fest an mich pressen,
Dann wär die Welt um mich vergessen.

Ich möchte dich an mich verlassen
Und all die andern Menschen hassen,
Ich möchte leben nur für Dich,
Wenn du mich liebst, so wie ich dich.

Figure 6.
(*Die Freundin*, 6 April 1932)

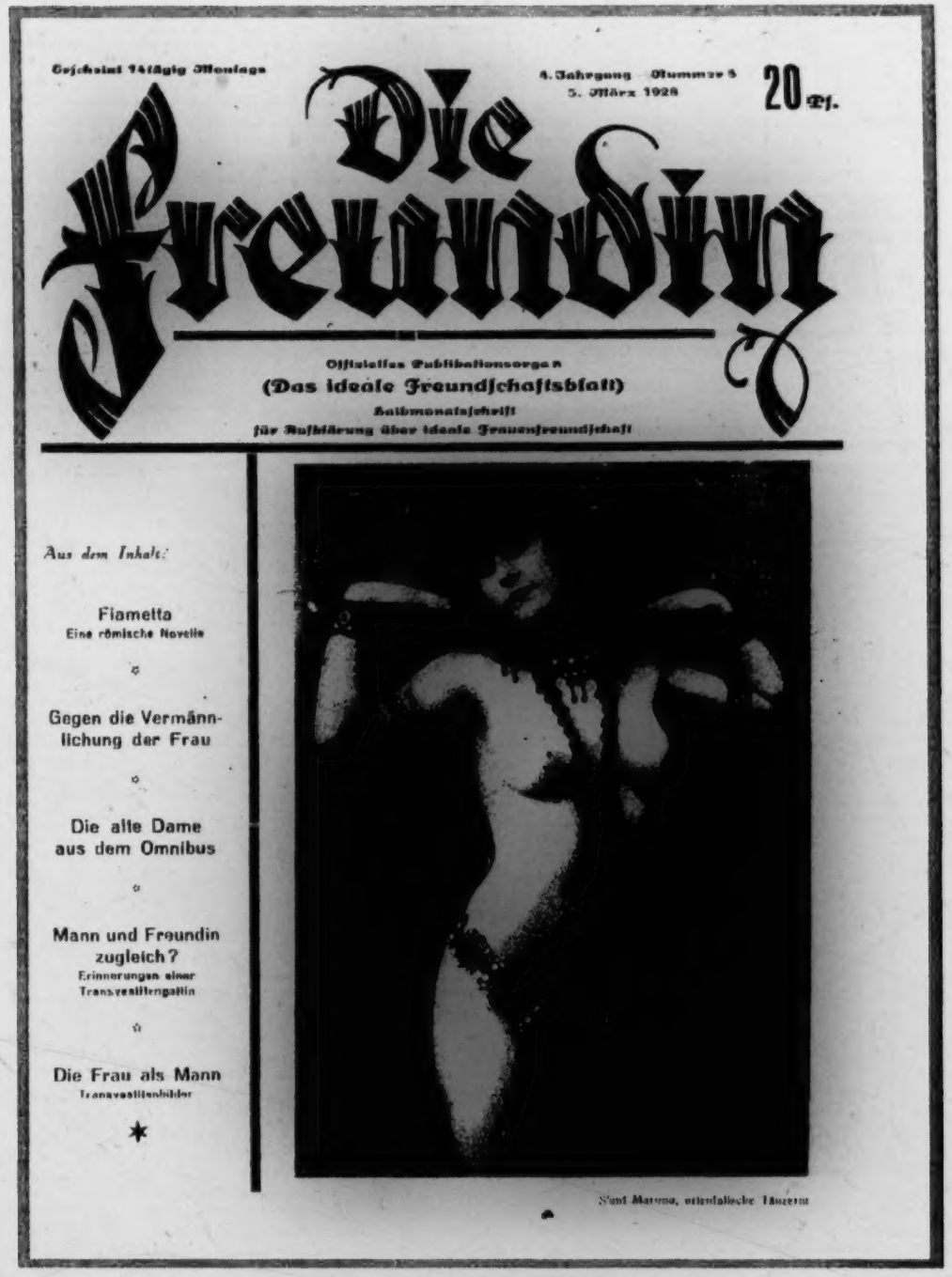


Figure 7. "S'ent Marona, orientalische Tänzerin"
(*Die Freundin*, 5 March 1928)

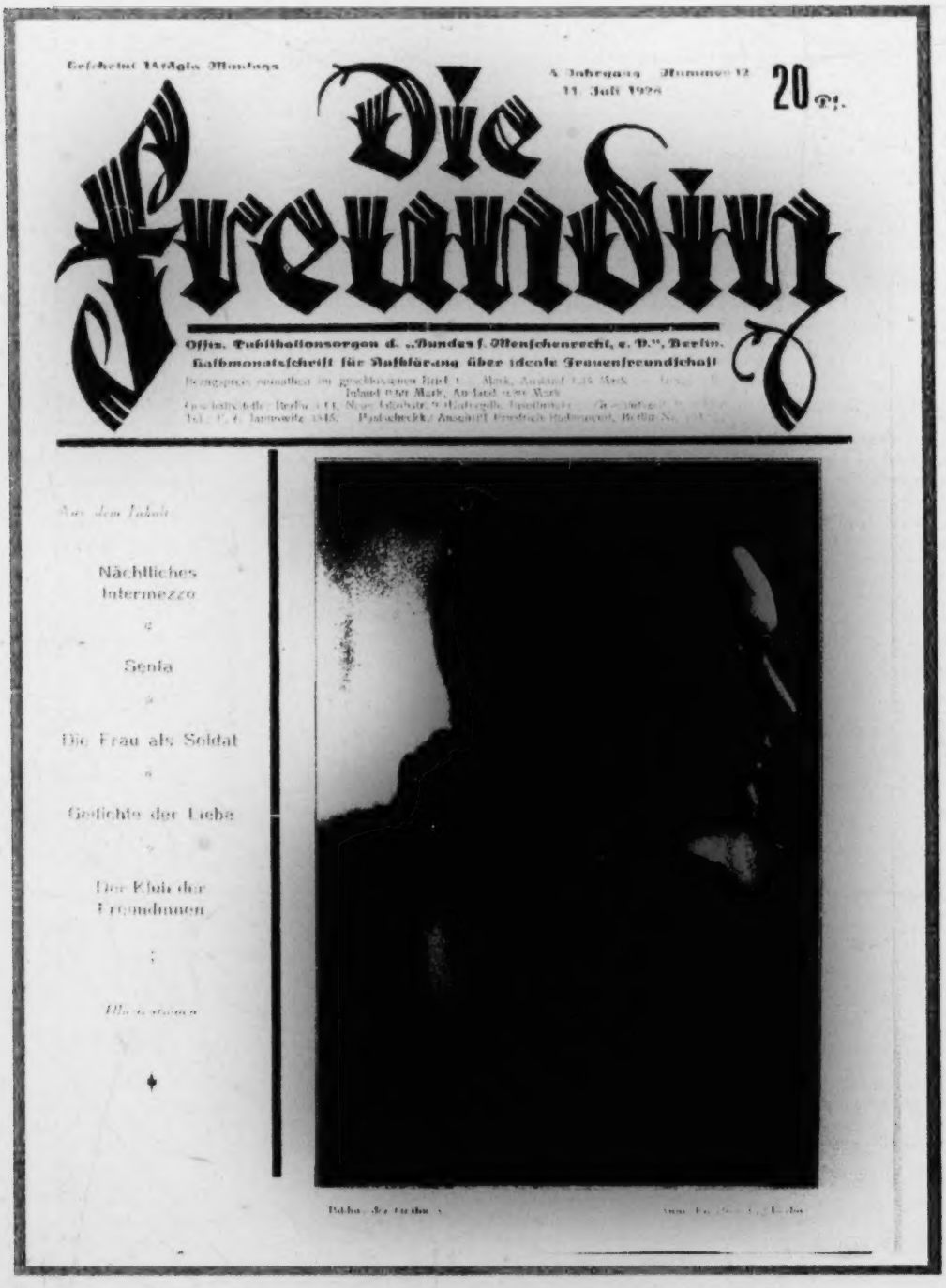


Figure 8. "Bildnis der Gräfin X"
(*Die Freundin*, 11 July 1928)

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7. Jahrgang Nummer 43 20 Pf.
28. Oktober 1931

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## Märchenland

Das heiße Gold der Sommersonne
Sank in den Purpur voller Rosen,
Die leise schwankend auf den Gräbern
standen.
Und Trauerweiden, gleich den Silberschleiern
Bedeckten sie den weißen, kalten Marmor.
Doch kalter . . ist der Tod . . . .
Der bleiche König, dessen kühle Hände
Die heißen Schmerzen dieses Lebens
lindern,
Und in dem Dunkel melancholischer Zypressen
Genesen alle Herzen, die das Leben verwundet . . . .
Dann blühen Stunden auf, wie Märchenblumen,
Die wir so oft vergeblich uns ersehnen.
Die weichen Astern, die so zärtlich küssen
Die schmalen Särge und die Urnen . . .
Auch Nachtveilchen, deren Blütensamt
Sich an geschlossne Lider schmiegt . . .
Und schwere, dunkle, lila Chrysanthemen
Sie sind wie Sünde . . . die man nie vergißt! . . .
Und ihre wilde Sehnsucht reißt die Gräber auf,
Die toten Gräber, die ihr Tore sind
Ins Märchenland
Dort gehen alle Wünsche in Erfüllung,
Die Liebe wächst ins Riesenhafte
Und ist ganz Ewigkeit . . . . .

Figure 9.
(*Die Freundin*, 28 October 1931)

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6. Jahrgang — Nummer 17 — 30. April 1930 — 20 Pf.

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Figure 10.
(*Die Freundin*, 30 April 1930)

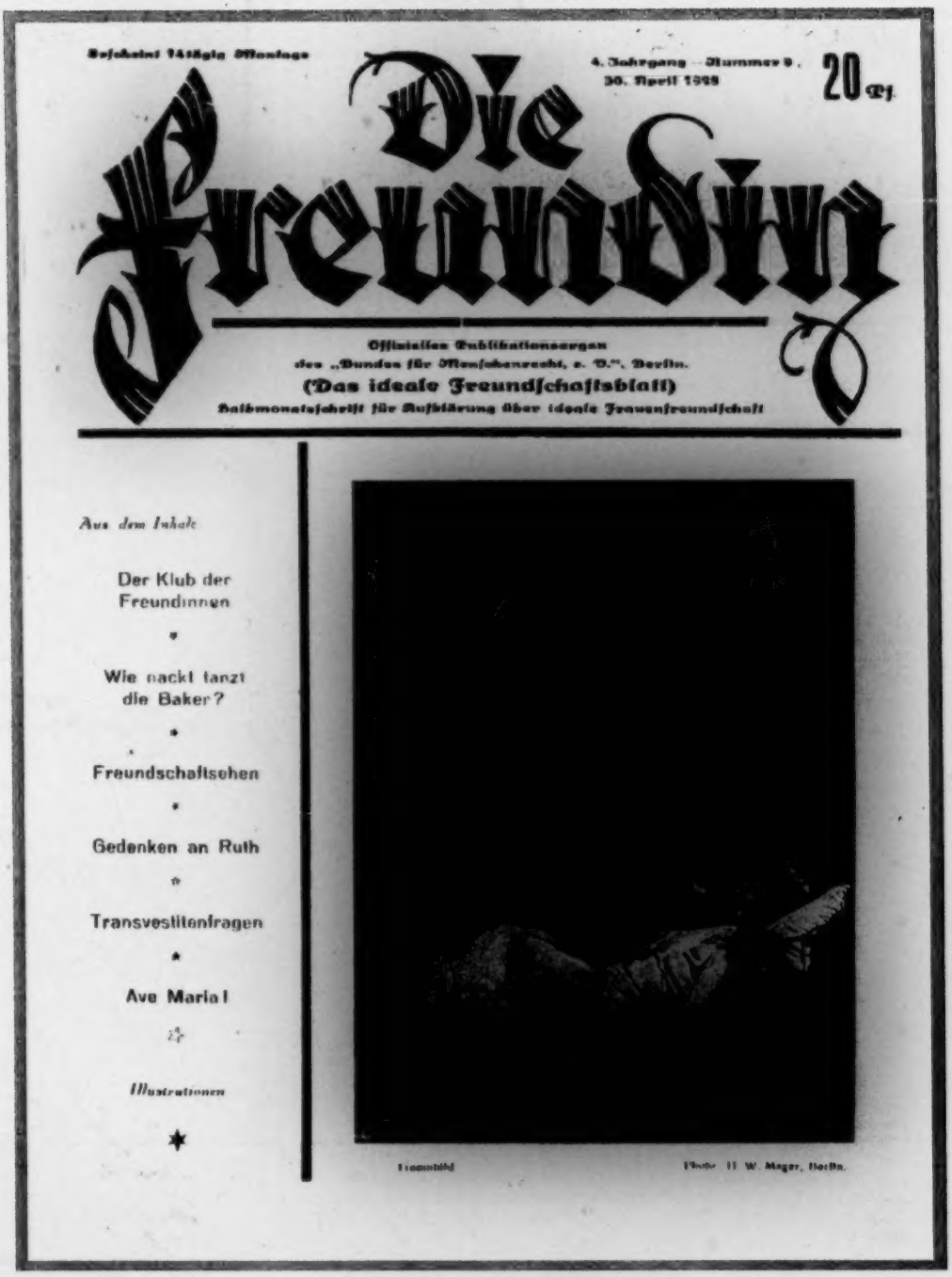


Figure 11. "Traumbild"
(*Die Freundin*, 30 April 1928)

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5. Jahrgang — Nummer 5

31. Juli 1929

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# Die Freundin

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## Madame Chrysanthem

Marie-Luise von Parn.

Eine hübsche Japanerin,
Gott weiß, welch' ein Schicksal das Püppchen hat?
Blickt aus dem hohen vierstöckigen Haus
Lächelnd erstaunt auf die Straße hinaus,
Der stets belebten Millionenstadt.

Eine frohe Japanerin,
Helle Sonnenblüte am Alltagsweg,
Schaut sich das Treiben still verwundert an.
Reizend zarte O Mimosa-San,
Wimpern getuschte Schwarz Auglein stehn schräg.

Eine feine Japanerin,
Goldlackene Händchen, kleinwenzig, ich wähs,
Meine, sind die Menschen hier riesenhaft groß,
Ich bin ja ein niedliches Blockchen bloß,
Heimatsrecht an dem Lande des Tees."

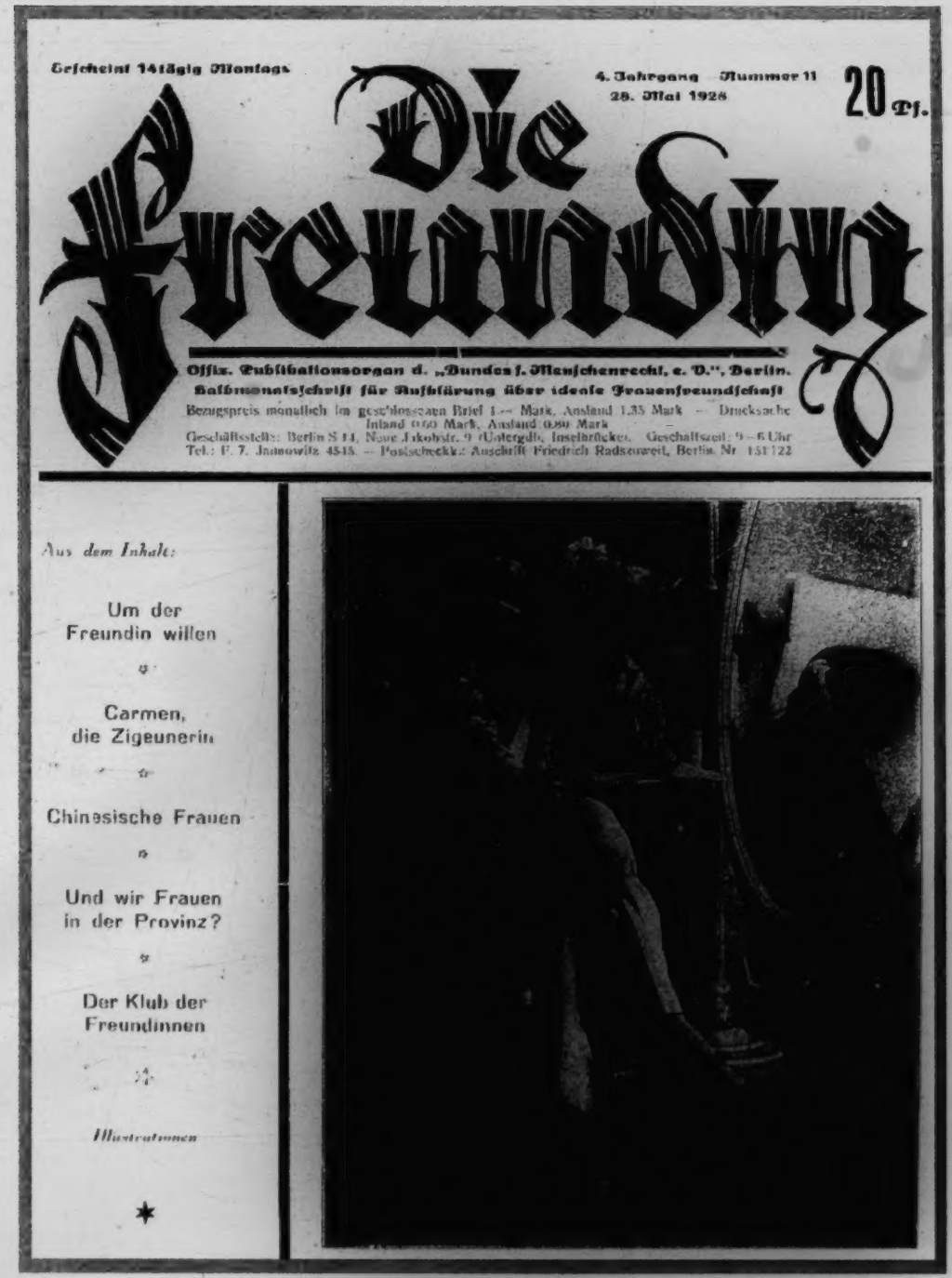
Anmutvolle Japanerin,
Träumst du von dem Häuschen aus Bambusrohr?
Bunten Papieren an grellem Papier,
Süßen Klingenden Glöckchen Trompetzier,
Seelchen, das weltfremd noch zu uns verlor,

Eine kecke Japanerin,
Selbst und verschmitzt, nein, wahrhaftig nicht dumm,
Modenheft hübsches, verschwiegenes Gesicht,
Ein Europäer umarmt sie nicht,
Duftlos, buntes Chrysanthemum.

Ei, du süße Japanerin,
Kleine, schillerndes, bauchiges Ding,
Lange noch seh' ich zum Fenster empor,
Folge noch deinem — bald dem Karchen extra,
Bunter japanischer Schmetterling.



Figure 12.
(*Die Freundin*, 31 July 1929)



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4. Jahrgang Nummer 11
28. Mai 1928

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# Die Freundin

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*Aus dem Inhalt:*

Um der Freundin willen

☆

Carmen, die Zigeunerin

☆

Chinesische Frauen

☆

Und wir Frauen in der Provinz?

☆

Der Klub der Freundinnen

☆

*Illustrationen*

✱

Figure 13. "La Garçonne"
(*Die Freundin*, 28 May 1928)

Erscheint jeden Mittwoch

6. Jahrgang — Nummer 12
19. März 1930

20 Pf.

# Die Freundin

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## Zwei Gedichte von Modeste-Demona

### In einer lauen Frühlingsnacht . . .

In einer lauen Frühlingsnacht
Ist unser holdes Glück erwacht . . .
Verlangend fand sich Mund zu Munde;
Bis in des Herzens tiefstem Grunde
Hat deine Lieb' mich weich gemacht.

In einer lauen Frühlingsnacht
Bist du ganz leis von mir gegangen . . .
So müde, mit so bleichen Wangen
Nahmst du das Glück mir still und stumm . . .
Und qualvoll trag' ich mich „Warum?"

### Zu spät!

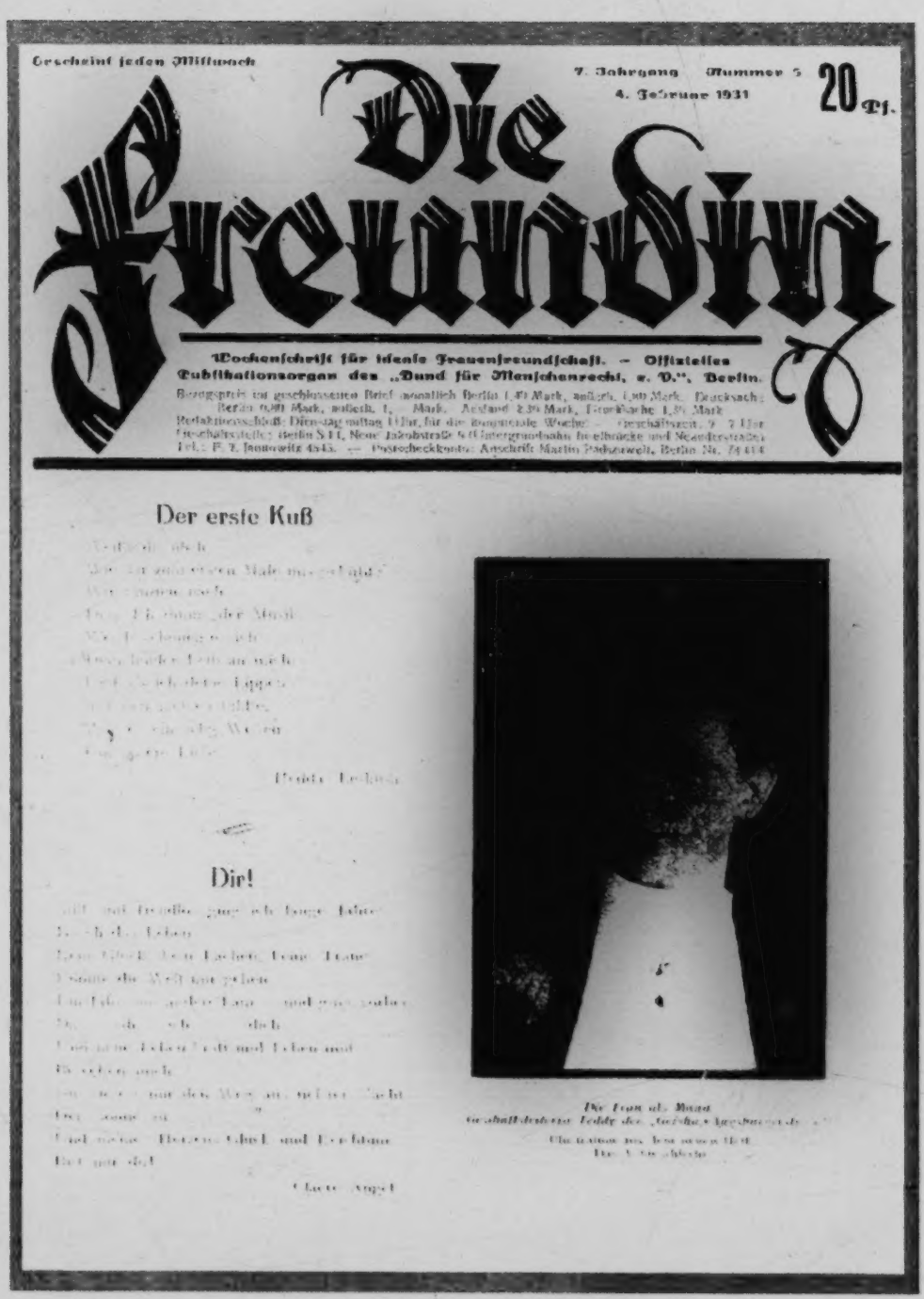
So ist die Einsicht doch in dich gekommen,
Du suchst an meiner Tür und flehst mich an
Nur, daß ich deinen Bitten und Versprechen
Nicht glauben kann.

Wohl trug' ich Keinen Groll für dich im Herzen;
Ich wünsche dir, daß dein Leben glücklich sei.
Nur glaube mir, daß ich dir wiederkehr'
Das ist [illegible] vorbei!

Ich weiß, ich weiß, du willst mir alles sühnen!
Ich weiß, die Reue kniet auf dir schwer!
Ich aber muß an jene Tage denken
Und kann nicht mehr!

Die moderne Frau!

Figure 14. "Die Moderne Frau!"
(*Die Freundin*, 19 March 1930)



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7. Jahrgang Nummer 5

4. Februar 1931

20 Pf.

# Die Freundin

Wochenschrift für ideale Frauenfreundschaft. – Offizielles Publikationsorgan des „Bund für Menschenrecht, e. V.", Berlin.

## Der erste Kuß

## Dir!

Die Frau als Mann
Geschäftsleiterin Teddy der „Geisha"

Figure 16. "Vilma West, die aus Liebe zu ihrer Freundin ihren Mann erschlug" (*Die Freundin*, 2 April 1928)

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# Die Freundin

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**Dieses Blatt darf überall sichtbar ausgehängt werden!**

## Auf ewig dein!

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Figure 18. "Lotte Hahm"
(*Die Freundin*, 25 March 1931, 7)